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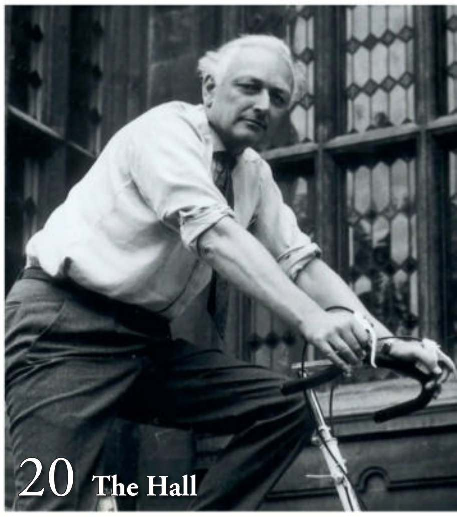

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Cover: The King and Queen
Image: Tom Askew-Miller

Giving thanks for a moment in history

Georgie Green looks back at the wonderful celebrations to herald the crowning of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Highworth
Cricklade
Malmesbury
Swindon
Royal Wootton Bassett
Chippenham
Calne
Corsham
Marlborough
Bradford on Avon
Melksham
Devizes
Trowbridge
Westbury
Ludgershall
Tidworth
Warminster
Amesbury
Mere
Wilton
Salisbury

ON CORONATION day, I got up early determined to watch every moment of the historic event. This meant feeding my daughter's horse and his field companions first thing. They had no sense of the significance of the day, but it didn't stop me from cutting up carrots and forming them in the shape of a C on top of their feed and then splashing a nip of The King's Ginger into the mix and toasting them with a 'God Save The King'. I would like to think just for a moment they realised something rather special was about to occur.

It was a truly wonderful weekend, with bunting and flags flying across the nation from London to Liverpool and here in the county from Salisbury to Swindon. Throughout the pages of this issue, we reflect on the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla through the words of people here in the county, who witnessed the service in person at Westminster Abbey, attended the Windsor Castle concert or simply marked the occasion with friends, family and communities by holding Coronation Big Lunches or a get together around the television.

The threads that stitched the weekend together highlighted the importance of community, service and friendship. We share the stories of those who have given their time and dedication to their communities or charities. This commitment and service of people who dedicate their lives to others was rewarded and recognised in many ways, either through an invitation to the ceremony itself, a ticket to the Windsor Castle concert or as Lady Fiona Lansdowne explains,(page 36) being asked to support a friend. As one of Queen Camilla's attendants throughout the Coronation, she reveals more about days leading up to the event and what it meant to her to support a friend at this momentous occasion.

Another loyal friend of The King and Queen, Sarah Troughton, Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire shares her diary over the three days. It certainly takes stamina to undertake the many duties she managed to fulfil in 72 hours. She represented The King at tea parties and church services. She handed out awards and even attended a street party lunch in Swindon with The Princess Royal – all with a smile on her face. Does she ever stop?

I have to single out one town – hats off to Marlborough and the team behind their extravaganza. It hasn't been officially verified but I believe the town may have hosted one of the biggest lunches in the country. We have shared just a few images but please head to their website to see more: www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk

Behind every party or event there is always a group of dedicated and unheralded volunteers, who work so hard to provide a quiche, a cake, set out chairs, hang bunting, and book the porta-loos. When it is all over, for most of us as if by magic everything is cleared away and life goes back to normal – although we all know they will be heading to another committee meeting to sort out a village show or a charity fundraising event. Thank you in advance for the next one… WL

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AROUND THE COUNTY

Building new futures

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Johnny Mercer MP, visited Drummond Park in Ludgershall, to meet with former soldiers who are working on a new housing project - Veteran Build Experiences.

The scheme, is being delivered developer Lovell, affordable housing provider, Stonewater, and Alabaré, and supported by Wiltshire Council. It provides the opportunity to develop new career skills, as well as secure a new affordable home.

The veterans, each of whom have faced being homeless since leaving the armed forces are supported by Alabaré, and receive mentoring, training on site and upskilling as part of the programme, each playing an integral role in the construction of the development.

Most hope to secure permanent employment in the industry going forward.

During his visit, Mr Mercer praised the scheme for its innovative approach to recruiting veterans into the construction industry. He highlighted the valuable skills and experience that they can bring to the industry, and emphasised the importance of supporting them in their transition to civilian life.

The project has three veterans currently working on site, including Kevin Chapman, an RAF veteran, who found himself homeless after a relationship breakdown. Kevin completed the Building Heroes course and has been working on site since it started in May 2022. He is due to move into one of the homes in August this year.

Student nurse takes centre stage at the Palace

Emily Palmer from Marlborough joined HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and presenter and journalist Charlotte Hawkins to give a speech to thousands of young people and their loved ones at Buckingham Palace as they celebrated achieving their gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.

25-year-old Emily who was also celebrating achieving her own gold award, took to the Palace's west terrace to share her own inspiring DofE story. She started her DofE aged 14 and achieved her bronze and silver Awards representing her region at basketball. However, following an accident in 2018, she was left unable to walk, and spent two years on crutches, undergoing physiotherapy. Emily says the dream of completing her gold DofE kept her going.

Emily is currently training to be a nurse. She is also a DofE UK Youth Ambassador, working with other young people to help steer the charity's work, share her DofE story and advocate on issues affecting young people, and has been chosen as a Coronation Champion for being one of the country's most exceptional volunteers.

- *www.dofe.org*

Trust and Town are a perfect match

The work of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Swindon Town Football Club to support young refugees has been recognised at an award ceremony at the House of Commons.

Swindon Town Football Club accepted the EFL Community Club of the Season Award thanks to their commitment to supporting refugees as part of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Programme.

The programme is an initiative commissioned by Wiltshire Council and was launched by the Trust in August 2019 in partnership with The Harbour Project in Swindon, working with children under the age of 18 who have fled their country of origin, without the care or protection of their parents, and are seeking asylum.

The programme aims to give the young people a sense of belonging, both geographically and emotionally. It also helps them overcome their trauma by providing them with the opportunity to have fun and make new friends, having lost so much of their childhood. This is achieved through ongoing support, the weekly football group and other events and activities during school holidays

Ali Nott from the trust travelled to the House of Commons reception with Yakob Adam Mohamed, an 18-year-old refugee who left his home in Sudan aged 14. It took Yakob three years to reach the UK, and he has since been attending regular events and activities under the trust's UASCProgramme. He was one of the first participants of the football group in January 2022, attending almost every session since.

Shane Hewlett from Swindon Town FC Community Foundation said "We love working with Ali Nott and her team from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. It was extremely special to receive this award recognising the great work and dedication from both our organisations."

Outdoor events to enjoy this month

From a Jane Austen classic to classical ballet events to savour under a summer sky

30th

OPEN GARDEN
WESTWIND
MANTON, MARLBOROUGH, SN8 4HL.

Discover a beautiful informal country garden set in four acres including a two-and-a-half-acre meadow which is home to a rich assortment of wildlife.

Westwind has an abundance of mature trees, a cottage garden and beds full of herbaceous plants and the newly designed Armillary Garden which is home to 10 raised beds stuffed with colour from April to October.

This event is a combined National Garden Scheme (NGS) opening with Peacock Cottage, SN84HQ.

Here you will find an expertly tended, undulating garden, comprising of herbaceous and mixed borders, parterre and exotic bed.

Disabled parking places identified in the nearby car park.

Admission for both gardens is £10 and it is free for children. Home-made teas.

For details of all NGS Wiltshire open gardens: www.ngs.org.uk/wiltshire

08th

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY
LACOCK ABBEY

Chapterhouse Theatre Company presents a magical night of theatre under the summer sky. Follow the trials and triumphs of the Dashwood girls as they make their first tentative forays into Regency Society. – a world where the parties are tremendous, and every woman is on the lookout for a husband!

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

©ALICE PENNEFATHER

27th-30th

BALLET UNDER THE STARS
ÉTOILES OF PARIS OPERA BALLET & FRIENDS
HATCH HOUSE, SP3 6PA

Ballet Under the Stars is a unique summer event, held in the beautiful and romantic 17th century walled Dutch garden of Hatch House near Tisbury.

The production will feature present and future stars of The Paris Opera Ballet and the Royal Ballet

Be transported to 1920's Paris, where the Café Folle will serve Parisian cocktails, and in the gardens experience a series of light art installations by special guest artist Hugo Dalton. After the evening's performances end, Café Folle will have transformed into a Parisian speakeasy with live performances from singer Faiith Lynch which lets the evening continue.

To Book: events@coventgardendance.com
01749 813313
www.coventgardendance.com

Quality care in Salisbury you can trust

When a family is thinking about care for a loved one, they want the best - they want to know that the care home they choose will put their loved one's safety, happiness and wellbeing first.

Show suite now open

Salisbury Manor will redefine care home living

Expect the latest in expert, tailored care delivered in luxurious surroundings, with a strong emphasis on helping residents to continue living an independent life. Whether your loved one needs residential, nursing, dementia or respite care, we can help.

Salisbury Manor is managed by award-winning provider Care UK - one of the UK's most highly successful care home operators* with over 40 years' experience of delivering high quality care to older people.

Living at Salisbury Manor is all about quality of life. Every colleague in the home is passionate about enabling residents to enjoy a fulfilling lifestyle, tailored around their unique needs and preferences. The lifestyle team organises a huge variety of group and one-to-one activities, with plenty going on each day.

With the extra support that our care home offers, new residents are often surprised at what they can do, whether that's being

able to continue with an activity they've enjoyed in the past, or even discovering new hobbies with our daily activities.

The purpose-built home is designed for enjoying a luxury lifestyle, with en-suite rooms and facilities including a café, hair and beauty salon, and comfortable lounges and dining rooms. The home also boasts lovely gardens with wheelchair friendly pathways – the perfect place to spend some time when the weather allows.

Whether your loved one enjoys a quiet cup of tea in bed before starting the day, loves going for strolls in the landscaped grounds, or enjoys a chat over a glass of wine, the team at Salisbury Manor will spend time to enable them to continue living life the way they want to.

Salisbury Manor care home
Shapland Close, Salisbury,
Wiltshire SP2 7EJ
01722 704 154
careuk.com/salisbury-manor

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*As rated by the Care Quality Commission in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland.

Rebecca Hudson

As the chief of staff for Devizes MP Danny Kruger, Rebecca works in the centre of the county, but it is in the south where she feels truly at home.

I'M PROUD to say I've lived in Wiltshire for almost my entire life to date - bar one year spent in Oxford, so at least it was only the county next door and I could happily stay here for the remainder. I was born in Salisbury hospital, and live within walking distance of the house I grew up in. I attended school here, I lived here while I attended university, and the most meaningful moments of my career have all taken place here. My childhood memories and most of my closest relationships have all been formed here. Growing up in Salisbury at times felt a bit slow (and I think it's still fair to say there's not a huge amount for young people to do) but as an adult I'm very grateful my parents chose to settle in the city and raise me and my sister here, so thank you to them both.

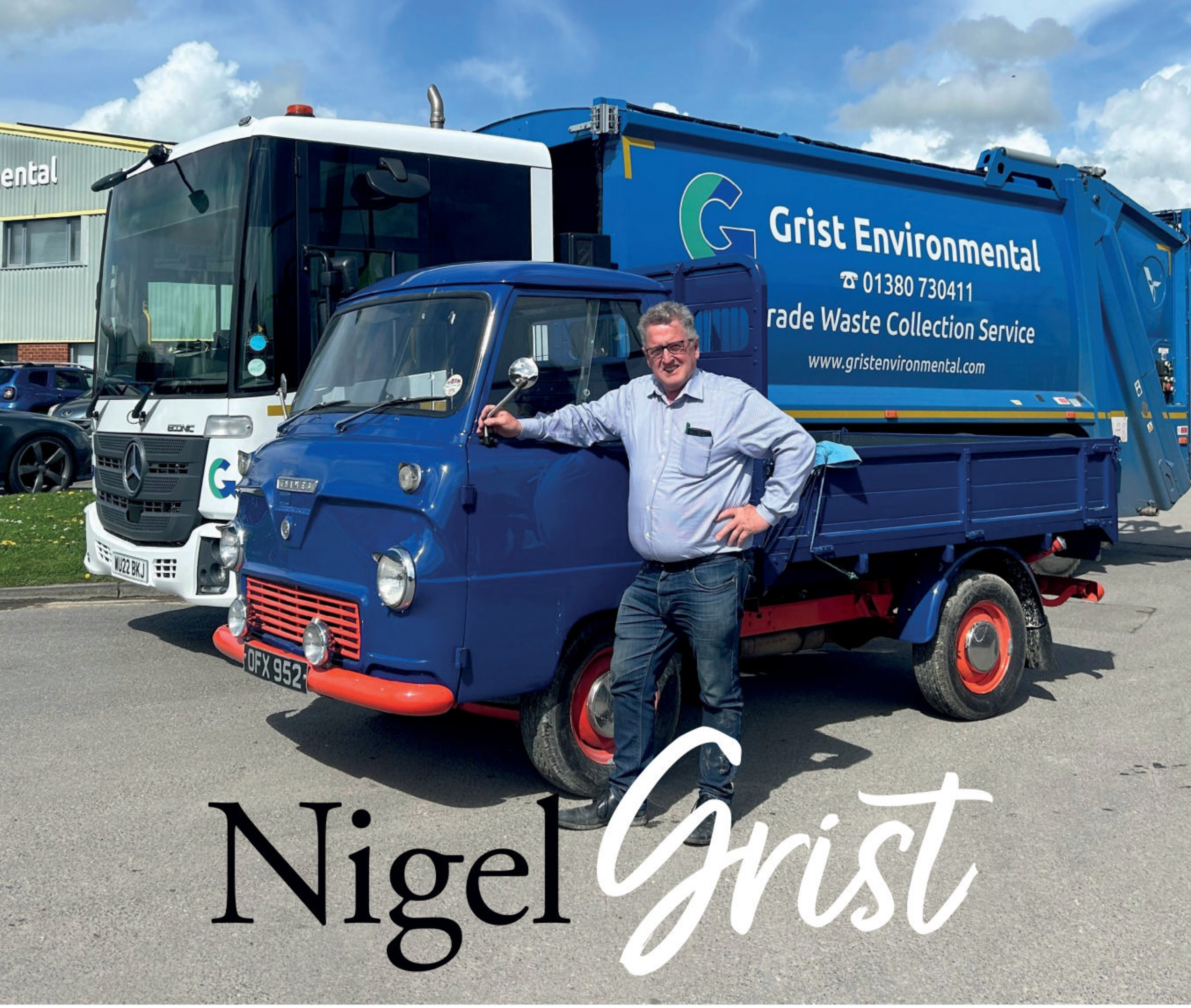
Thinking of Salisbury will always make me think of my first years at school, at the now-closed Leaden Hall. Perhaps unsurprisingly, at age five I didn't appreciate just how lucky I was to spend every day in such beautiful surroundings, but when I think of Salisbury now I think of travelling through the Cathedral Close each morning. I particularly liked returning to school every September as the leaves changed and the whole place was golden.

Somewhat accidentally, having decided to be a lawyer, I became a journalist for my local paper. I ended up as an apprentice reporter in Salisbury, working up to news editor. If you want to know somewhere really well, you should read the local paper. If you want to know it even better, you should work for the local paper. I loved learning more about the workings of the city and its people, our traditions and heritage, and what really matters to those who live here in their day-to-day life. Sitting in public meetings or spending a day in Salisbury's courts will only give you an increased understanding of the make-up of where we live, and I feel lucky to have been able to do so on a daily basis.

My spate running the paper coincided with the period that the city was rocked by the nerve agent attack. In my mind Wiltshire evokes the feeling of a historic, quiet county, with images of rolling green hills and small market towns. Certainly not the setting you'd expect Russia to launch an assassination attempt. I won't go into too much detail, we all remember it and I'm reluctant to continuously mention it every time I discuss the city I grew up in and love - but to me my lasting memory is one of Salisbury's resilience, and of coming together as a real community. In recent years the whole country has felt divided, but to see the city pull together (offering food and drink for emergency services staff and supporting businesses, to name a few small examples) only cemented my respect for where I come from. It was a terrible incident, one which still makes me incredibly angry, but I was proud to play a small role in keeping the city's citizens updated and to take part in discussions about how to actively help Salisbury recover.

It's the sense of community I really missed in my brief year away from Wiltshire (during which I visited frequently). Perhaps I would feel the same about somewhere else if I'd grown up there, but I do believe this place is special. To be able to walk across Salisbury market square and catch up with people, or to know you probably share at least one mutual friend with almost everyone never stops being entertaining and comforting to me. I've tried to extend this further by joining a busy and friendly gym in the city centre and singing in my local parish church choir in the beautiful Italianate church in Wilton.

I now work north of the infamous (to those living in Wiltshire) Salisbury Plain divide, and as well as the familiar beauty of my own city I have been able to explore our other towns and enjoy powerful and picturesque local landscapes - I particularly enjoy the sweeping views across the Marlborough Downs in brilliant winter sun. Although I happily argue with my colleagues about who lives on the 'best' side of the self-imposed dividing line of the county, the truth is we are all very lucky. This place is incredibly important to me and I hope I can continue to be happy here, with my family and friends around me, for a very long time. WL



Nigel Grist

Grist Environmental Services in Devizes celebrates 50 years in business this year. As he celebrates the half century in typically modest fashion, founder Nigel Grist tells Gary Lawrence how it all started.

Nigel Grist at his Devizes HQ with a Thames 400E flatbed, just like the one he bought to get himself started in business 50 years ago, and a very much newer and more expensive waste truck.

THE JUNIOR bank manager's refusal was polite but firm – there wasn't any way he was going to lend 17-year-old Nigel Grist £100 to buy a rickety Thames 400E flatbed to set himself up in the scrap metal game.

By that time the teenager had already been turned down by his father Edgar who, even after a lifetime dairy farming on a council smallholding in Poulshot from 5am to 9pm every day, simply didn't have the money. Undeterred, Nigel demanded to see the bank's man in charge.

If any of them could have foreseen the £20 million a year turnover business he has built in the intervening 50 years, bringing 200 jobs to the local community across five sites in and around Devizes, they would have handed over the cash on the spot. But back in 1973 nothing came easy to the youngster who'd been told he'd never amount to anything.

"My two brothers and two sisters went to the grammar school and got degrees but I was like the black sheep of the family," he recalls in the boardroom of Grist Environmental on Devizes' Nursteed Trading Estate.

"I had it drummed into me by my teachers that I was going to be useless and no good for anything – and I was determined that wouldn't be the case."

Nigel left school at 15 and after working on his uncle's farm had set his sights on a trade that intrigued him. "There was an old chap who used to come round and pick up scrap from the farm and he always had a massive wad of notes in his pocket, which excited me," he recalls.

So, back to Lloyds Bank in Devizes Market Place and an appointment with manager Peter Rainford. "I took in an insurance policy I'd taken out when I was 15 that paid out when I was 30," says Nigel. "After a lot of persuasion he lent me £100 on the strength of that."

Within six weeks he'd paid it back and taken out another loan for £400, followed quickly by one for £800 and eventually £1,200. By the time he came back and asked for £12,000 to buy a yard he was seen as man going places. But although his progression may have looked easy every pound was earned with back-breaking effort.

"I used to cut up the cars I collected with an axe," he recalls. "Cars had a lot of aluminium and brass on them so I'd rip all that out and take out all the copper cable. Then I had to load everything up on the van by hand.

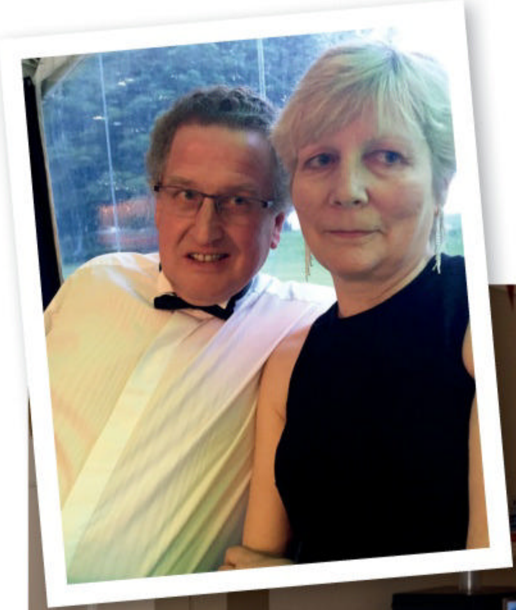
"On Friday nights I'd burn out the copper wire to remove the copper. I'd be up until 2am getting it all ready, along with the aluminium and non-ferrous metals I'd collected, to take it to GH Flower in Chippenham on Saturday morning. I used to aim to try and get £100 worth every week."

Scrap metal dealers had, and probably always will have, a reputation akin to car dealers, safecrackers, politicians and timeshare salesmen so Nigel adopted what was a radical approach for his chosen trade – he was honest.

"In those days there was a lot of scrap about and there were people who were glad to see someone come and take it," he says. "Some people would take the best stuff and leave the rubbish and customers would tell me 'the last bloke never paid me'. I would pick up everything and tidy up and people appreciated that.

"Once I'd done a deal with anyone that was it, I would never go back on my word and that helped me when I started. The dodgy characters before opened the door for me and I couldn't go wrong."

'I wouldn't have what I have now if it wasn't for her'



Left: Nigel Grist and his late wife Diana.

Below: Nigel Grist with a celebration cake marking his 50 years in business at a surprise party arranged by his family and colleagues.

His growing reputation and level-headed approach led to two encounters that would have a bearing on the rest of his life. Percy Rawlings, a veteran farmer from Seend, was so impressed he lent him £4,000 to add to the £8,000 the bank was prepared to advance when he bought his first yard in Webbs Lane, Devizes.

"He was a lovely old chap, a genuine, proper farmer who'd worked hard all his life. He obviously saw me working hard and decided to help me," says Nigel.

The second encounter had an even longer-lasting effect when in 1977 he met 17-year-old Diana at Devizes Carnival – the girl who would be his wife for 40 years.

They were together when farmer Les Witts, whose Park View Farm neighboured the Webbs Lane yard, jokingly told him he ought to buy his farm as he was buying everything else in the area. Only it turned out he wasn't joking when an agent rang Nigel to discuss the sale.

"I was up to my ears in debt and went to see Peter Rainford. The farm was going to cost £132,000 for 48 acres and a bungalow," he says. "He came down and had a look round and offered me the money for six per cent over base rate. I thought I'd make it work one way or another because I wanted it. I'd been brought up on a farm and I was used to open spaces, and the bungalow had tremendous views.

"I was 24 then and in the Thatcher years the bank rate went up to 15 per cent so for seven months I was paying 21 per cent, that was painful, believe you me."

With debt weighing him down the only answer was to keep working. "Everything was a mad rush, I was going 100mph all day long but I was so much in debt I had to keep going, I couldn't stop," he says.

"I had a lot of frightening times when things were tight to say the least but we were lucky because the bank understood things. I was also lucky that I had a wife who was very good at figures and had a wonderful memory. She threw herself into the business and I wouldn't have what I have now if it wasn't for her."

One of his lowest points came when he had to replace a clutch in a lorry that was needed to pick up scrap the next morning – at a time when the business needed every penny to stay afloat. It was 3am by the time he had almost finished but, try as he might, he couldn't get the gearbox back in.

"I walked back to the bungalow almost in tears," he recalls. "I thought 'this is it, I am not going to make it'. I went and had a few hours' sleep and came back in the morning and the gearbox went straight in, I couldn't believe it."

The view from Park View Farm took in picturesque Castle Farm across the valley and it was while admiring it with his father one day that he vowed to buy it if it ever came up for sale. Sure enough, he won it at auction

Top right: Nigel with his children, Adam, left, James, Marcus and Nicole; Above: An unexpected call to take care of waste at a US Embassy event led to a meeting with Michelle Obama for Nigel Grist, centre, with son Marcus, right, and colleague Josh Hunter.

just a few years later. "It was in another recession and no one could understand why I wanted it," he says. "But I'd told my dad I was going to do it.".

Not long after he snapped up North Lower Park farm with a sealed bid, meaning he now owns half the valley between Devizes Castle and Whistley Road. He says his only intention has always been to protect it. "It's a wonderful wildlife area and I love it because it is beautiful," he says. "I am able to enjoy it now because I have got a fantastic team working for me and I have got time to spend time there."

He put just as much effort into developing the business, taking advantage of Diana's acumen and his own gut instinct. The business developed as he added waste collection, skip hire and plastic, food and hazardous waste services over an expanding number of sites.

Along the way there were environmental court battles with Kennet District Council, both of which ended in victory and a long, fruitless tax investigation, which ended with the inspector departing with only a slice of homemade cake and a wasted week.

Undeterred, Nigel bought the tip at Nursteed Road, moved the headquarters to the nearby trading estate and opened a car body repair shop at the Hopton Industrial Estate. "I once had an accountant," he recalls, "who asked me one day 'where's your business plan?' I said ' I don't know what you are on about'. He said 'you couldn't have got here without one' and I replied 'well, I'm here'. I run my business on my gut feeling and it feels right, I've got to try it."

An example of the way the business has grown came in a phone call late one afternoon from a friend running an agricultural show who had been let down by a contractor who was supposed to take care of on-site litter.

Despite his friend's scepticism, he supplied him with wheelie bins which provided an efficient place for showgoers to dump their rubbish. The service went so well he had calls from other show organisers and did eight other events that year.

Last year the business did more than 160, including Henley Regatta and festivals including Reading, Leeds, Boardmasters, End of the Road and Camp Bestival. "It's unbelievable really," says Nigel. "We just keep doing a good job and people keep calling."

One random phone call requesting bins even led to Nigel and his team attending a reception at the American Embassy, where he met Michelle Obama. "It was amazing, I still wonder how it happened," he recalls.

Nigel and Diana's sons Adam, James and Marcus work in the business while daughter Nicole is a veterinary nurse. While all of them enjoyed a happy and secure home, none have to spend very long recalling holidays.

"We never went on them," says Nigel. "Diana and I went to Monaco to see the Grand Prix five times in 40 years. My children would tell you that we'd go down to the beach but by the time we got there it was dark because we would go and look at scrap yards on the way."

His staff reveal that even after his first trip to Monaco he was showing them photos he'd taken of the principality's bin lorries.

Six years ago Diana died after a long kidney illness. "It felt like I'd lost everything and for a couple of years I was completely lost and didn't have any interest in anything," says Nigel.

"She was a massive part of the business and treated everyone here like a second family. They all loved her. She never complained, she never wanted fancy things and all the money we made went into the business. She was completely dedicated to it."

Before she died she'd received a keep the date card from her twin brother's son for his wedding. "She said to me 'you must go to that wedding'. Not 'we must go' but 'you'," says Nigel.

"I lost her a month later and the wedding played on my mind. I wasn't going to go but she never, ever, told me I had to do anything before, so I went. I met some old friends there and they invited me out one night for a meal. I went and that's where I met Alison."

He says his new partner has given him a fresh perspective on life and rekindled a passion for the business that will keep him fully focused for many years yet. "She has given me a lot of confidence and she's good to be around and has given me a different perspective on life," he says.

"It's great to still be here after 50 years. I'm very proud to have got where we've got, having three sons working with me and having a great team of staff. I'm not going anywhere for a long while yet."

In a business world where decisions are made on the strength of cash projections, forecasts and marketing reports and no deal is sealed without armies of lawyers, it's refreshing to see the man who doesn't understand the meaning of 'can't' flourishing through old-fashioned hard work, straight talking and common decency.

"If I do a deal and shake hands on it, that's it," he says. "I think people know that about me by now."

They also know that, in the end, he always gets his way. "The big thing I was always told that fired me up was 'you can't do that'," he says. "That's not a thing to say to me." WL

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Flower power

Pauline Church gave up the world of corporate finance to open a floristry business in her hometown of Wilton. She told Gary Lawrence how she helped it blossom.

THE THREE ducks in flight on the wall of Pauline Church's florist's Paloma Lily aren't just a piece of quirky décor, they're a nod to one of the inspirations for a career change that saw her exchange banking for bouquets.

Tired of 3am alarm calls and wearying days in Geneva tending to high-maintenance hedge funders for JP Morgan, she woke up in the middle of the night and decided to scratch the itch that had been bugging her for six months.

"I've always been creative, always loved interiors and loved gardens," she says. "My grandparents and my mum were all brilliant gardeners, and my auntie was a florist so it's always kind of been around me.

"I went to do a course with the florist Jane Packer in London and came back to Salisbury station with armfuls of flowers with a big grin on my face just thinking 'my God I absolutely love this'. There wasn't a style of floristry particularly like that in Salisbury, I couldn't believe the size of the roses and how voluptuous all the blooms were and how just beautiful and luxurious it all was."

After at first dismissing the urge to give up banking as merely a mid-life crisis, she finally succumbed.

"I woke up at three in the morning thinking 'I need to do something about this'," she recalls. "I Googled my name, Pauline Elizabeth, found Paloma, and Lily of course is a short version of Elizabeth. I thought 'well those two work quite well together'. The web domain name was available, so I bought them there and then and wrote up my notice letter at the same time.

"I do think things through but at the same time I'm always up for a challenge and I'm not frightened of change. So I kind of didn't really consult anyone, I just did it."

She found an empty shop in West Street, Wilton, close to her home and set about preparing to open. "Setting up as a florist is actually quite easy," she says, "all you need is a pair of scissors, a bucket of water and the stock."

In spite of this a fair amount of preparation went into the opening, not least some market research and a floristry course with London expert Jamie Aston at his shop in Marylebone. "It wasn't just about the technical aspects of floristry – it was about suppliers, margins and how you price something. He was very generous with insider business knowledge.

"I also did a three-day wedding course but that is all the training I've had, so you could say I am largely self-taught."

She opened her shop in November 2012

Main Image: Pauline Church at her shop Paloma Lily in Wilton. Above: The enticing interior of the shop.

‘I’m always up for a challenge, I’m not frightened of change’ and happily admits she was terrified. “I was really scared the day I first opened the door and was thinking ‘what if no one comes in?’” she says.

“My first customer was a lady called Francesca and I still give her a hug when I see her now and I have had customers who have been with me ever since.”

Being freed from the yoke of financial rules and regulations may have unleashed Pauline’s creative side but the accountant in her provided some protection to her fledgling business. “The biggest risk area I suppose is looking after your product and not buying too much stock,” she says. “So in the very early days, and I don’t do it so much now because I feel confident, I used to track all my wastage and write it all down. Quite early on I worked out my wastage was so little it wasn’t worth the outlay of buying a cold store.”

That confidence is evident in the way she works, ordering fresh flowers every day rather than the three or so times a week favoured by other florists. She explains: “Floristry is a very dynamic business, the flowers are bought at auction in Holland in the morning and are available for florists to order from 2pm to midnight. The flowers come over to Southampton and are delivered here by 6am. So the flowers here now were in Holland yesterday.”

She may have been seduced into floristry by the baroque arrangements of the London exponents but has gradually adapted her style. “When I started out I knew most of the business was going to come from bespoke clients and flowers that I loved,” she says.

“I wasn’t prepared to compromise, and I still never buy flowers I don’t like. My core stock would always be things like peonies, roses, delphiniums, stocks and phlox – great country garden flowers.”

She believes what brings customers back time and again is not just the heady sensory experience of a roomful of flowers, but the pleasure of watching her create a bouquet in front of them. “The fact that we create something that can’t be bought elsewhere is what keeps us going,” she says. “I would hate to have a shop where you just unbox things, put them on a shelf and sell them.”

In 2018 she moved to the current, and larger shop, on the corner of West Street. As in the first one, she has a piano to display her flowers on. “They don’t cost you a thing because people are always trying to get rid of them,” she says. “I just wanted something a bit quirky, I can’t even play it.”

The flying ducks, inherited from her inspirational granny, are also a constant.

She opened another shop in Salisbury’s Market Square but, after receiving an attractive offer for the lease and being given the opportunity to buy the Wilton premises outright, she put all her blooms in one basket.

In 2013 she had been asked to become a Wilton town councillor, following in another set of family footsteps – her grandfather was mayor of Arbroath for 22 years. She did so well she received another request. “In 2017 I was asked if I would be a paper candidate in Wilton for Wiltshire Council. I didn’t know what that was until I was told it meant I didn’t have a chance in hell,” she says. “But I worked it and did my best and I won, not by much but I won after a recount.”

Her name was whispered along County Hall’s corridors of power as one to be watched and when Salisbury was stricken by the Novichok poisoning she was given the job of leading the area’s economic recovery.

“The situation was a complete unknown and the economic and welfare side were a concern,” she recalls. “For me personally it was 2am phone calls and national newspapers knocking on my door trying to get an angle on the story. It was a bit of an eye-opener and quite stressful because it was a big deal and I didn’t want to let people down.”

After a spell in the council’s cabinet as portfolio holder for children’s services and education she was diverted into the path of more calamity when she was appointed as the county’s ‘chancellor’ in charge of its finances – and another economic recovery – in the wake of the pandemic. Buoyed by the experience in Salisbury and her financial background, she threw herself into it. “It wasn’t easy, we didn’t know what government support was heading our way or how long it would all last,” she recalls. “It was a real worry.”

Last year she stepped down from the Cabinet to concentrate on the business but her political ambitions remain as keen as ever. In 2019 she stood in the general election in South Wales Labour stronghold Cynon Valley for the Tories and came a creditable second, angering Plaid Cymru and a local independent into the bargain.

“I received a death threat during the campaign and at the count I was advised to leave without making a speech because of the atmosphere,” she recalls.

She wants to put her hat in the ring for another seat, hopefully one that is safer in every sense, but in the meantime her focus is on her town, a new range of scented candles she has launched and the business.

Arranging flowers is a long way from the world of arranging loans but there is little Pauline misses about corporate life. “Finance is completely pragmatic and rules-based and you have no room for creativity,” she says. “I do think that if you have creativity or something else in your personality, it won’t be satisfied while you are there, that’s for sure.

“Now I never wake up thinking ‘oh God do I have to go into the shop today?’. Wilton is really social and what I love about being here is that is so community focused. It is such a diverse community and people here are fab. They come in, have a moan and put the world to rights and I really enjoy being part of that – whether it’s politics or posies.”

- *www.palomalily.com*

Pauline in the shop; the flying ducks inherited from her inspirational granny; tools of the trade.

Why three heads are better than one

MYTHOLOGY IS full of creatures with many heads. There's the fire-breathing Greek chimera – part lion, part goat and part dragon – the multi-headed Hydra, whose ability to grow a new head each time one was severed must have been quite useful until that fateful meeting with Hercules, and of course Cerberus, terrifying guardian of the underworld, servant of Hades and famously turned into 'Fluffy' by JK Rowling in the Harry Potter books.

There are certainly days when I would like to have more than one head, and although I'm not sure I'm keen on three times as many hair appointments, it would certainly be useful to have different heads for different things; perhaps one for work, one for home and one just for fun.

I would like to think that if work head didn't think about buying cat food at lunchtime, home head would kick in and make sure the cat didn't starve, whilst in the background fun head could think about planning where to go on holiday. All working together seamlessly, but sticking to what they do best so life ran smoothly without hiccups – or hungry cats.

Whilst I can certainly start to become some sort of monster if denied a steady supply of Diet Coke, I am yet to grow any additional heads. And whilst I am very much of the opinion that professionally three heads are better than one, I also know that not all of them should be mine.

One of the things I love about my job is people, be they clients, colleagues or other professionals, and one of the great joys about what we do is helping people overcome problems. Sometimes these are nice problems, such as helping families pass wealth through generations, other times they are less so, such as dealing with unexpected events, however there are two constants.

Firstly, it is always a privilege to be able to help people at some of the best and worst times in their lives, and the second is that when it comes to larger pieces of planning work, it is really quite unusual for me to be able to give a client the best solution on my own.

ISTOCK

Professional advisers working together can deliver the best results for clients.

When tackling a subject such as multi-generational wealth planning, there is always a lot to think about, and whilst my specialist area is tax, these larger planning scenarios will more often than not require input from financial planners and lawyers as well as me. In most situations, the best way for this advice to be formulated is by all of the relevant professionals sitting down in the same room to work out the goals and advise on their specialist area.

Whilst to some clients this may seem daunting, as professionals it is our job to make it seem easy. By working in this way, we are also able to maximise the value of our advice, which is important, as after all, usually we are talking about wealth which represents someone's life's work.

Every year we think about insurance for our assets to protect us from events which may or may not occur, yet the one certainty we do have is that at some point we will cease to exist, therefore getting the right advice to ensure our affairs are structured in a way which protects our loved ones is crucial.

At PKF Francis Clark, we are in a fortunate position in that as well as tax and accountancy services, we also have a successful in-house financial planning business, which allows us to work in a very joined-up way, and we have strong relationships with many legal and other professionals.

Right: Faye Howard, partner at PKF Francis Clark.

Whilst confronting our own mortality, or dealing with a tax planning exercise, might seem like a monstrous task, we can promise you none of us actually has three heads, we certainly don't bite and if needed we can even be fluffy. If you would like to speak about how our joined-up approach might be able to assist you or your family, do contact us and we can show you how when used in the right way, three heads are definitely better than one.

- *Faye Howard is a private client tax partner at the Salisbury office of PKF Francis Clark. For more information, email faye.howard@pkf-francisclark.co.uk or visit pkf-francisclark.co.uk*

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Moulton S speed

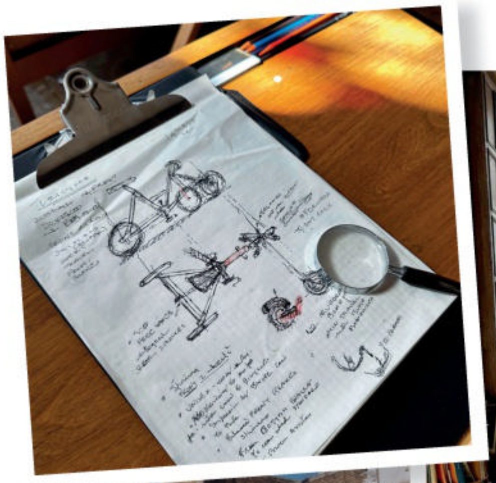
Engineer's revolutionary bicycle

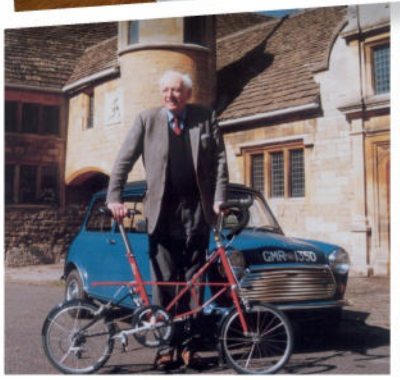
Trustees at The Hall in Bradford on Avon, the former home of engineer and designer Alex Moulton, are throwing open its doors to help fulfil his legacy. Gary Lawrence paid a visit to soak up some of the history.

THE DESKS where he worked are still strewn with drawings, designs and doodles, his pens left awaiting the next kernel of an idea to be committed to paper. Even his phone and his glasses lay where they were last left more than 10 years ago.

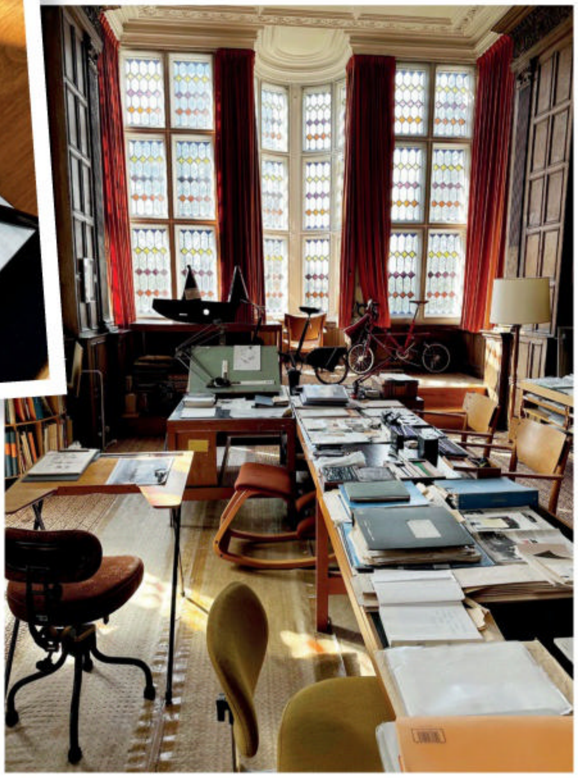
It's no wonder staff at The Hall in Bradford on Avon say it feels like Alex Moulton has just left the room.

The Grade I-listed Jacobean villa, the mercurial designer's family home for 150 years, was left to the Alex Moulton Charitable Trust after his death aged 92 in 2012. It has lain virtually untouched ever since, a treasure trove of engineering memorabilia, prototypes and letters and photographs featuring the great and the good.





Left: Alex Moulton at The Hall with the iconic bike he invented.



Alex Moulton's desks and drawings left untouched since he died in 2012; Alex with one of his Moulton bikes and and his classic Austin Mini car.

> 'In certain rooms you do feel his presence'

Now, after years of careful pondering, the trustees, faced with escalating maintenance bills and a commitment to promote Moulton's passion for excellence in engineering education, are walking a tightrope between preserving this fascinating memorial to its owner's genius and making it financially viable.

For the past five years they have welcomed visitors to occasional open days and house tours but now they are investing in major changes to maximise its commercial potential.

"Trustees have spent quite some time about the best way to make good on his wishes and as time has gone on it has become more and more evident about the urgent need to generate income," says director Christine Olivieri.

"Part of the charm of this house is that it absolutely feels like the man has just left the room. His clothes are all still here and his possessions are everywhere. In certain rooms you do feel his presence."

The first major step is converting what is now the trust's ground floor office into a self-contained holiday flat, complete with its own bathroom and mini kitchen. Work including more than £100,000 worth of roof restoration is afoot as part of a project to refurbish one of the estate's three cottages, which back on to the Holt Road running alongside the grounds, into a holiday home. By the end of the year there are plans to transform the Gate House, known as the Dovecote, into a three-storey holiday home to sleep five to six people. The attraction for visitors is obvious, not only will they be staying in the shadow of a historic home, but they will also have the use of its stunning gardens with their views across the picturesque town – and Moulton's own private cycle track.

Future plans include converting more upstairs rooms in the main house into up to six holiday lets, opening up an attic room as a flat and looking at restoring an unused Victorian basement kitchen and the family's boathouse.

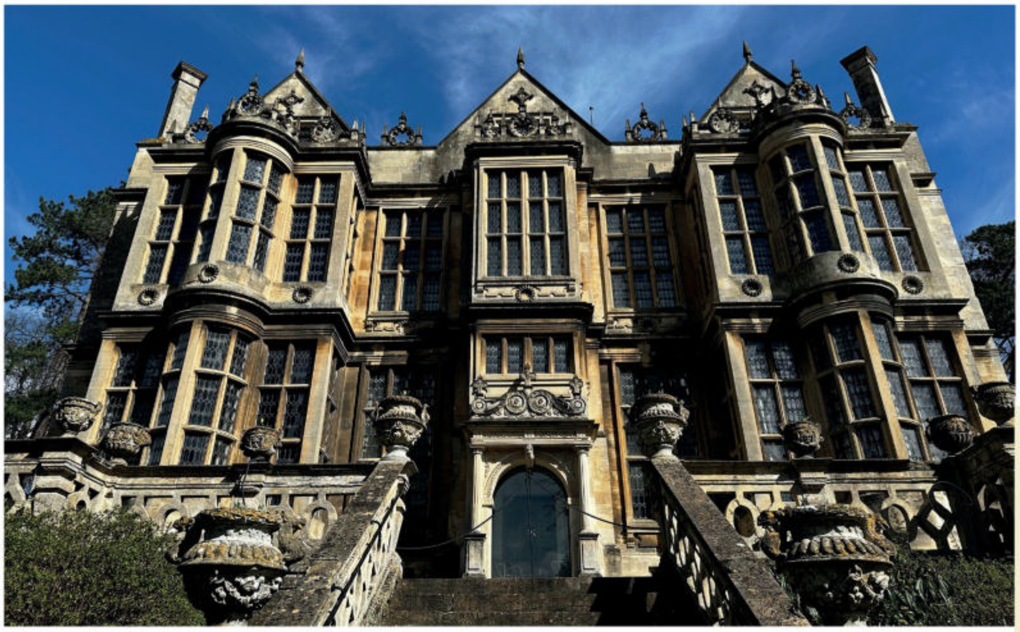
There is a drive to hire the house and grounds out for events, dinners and wedding receptions – as well as more tours.

"There is a big growth plan but we have to do it in a slow and steady in a considered way," says Christine. "Ultimately everything we do is to deliver the objectives of the charitable trust.

"It's not about being a commercial entity, it's about driving commercial activity to generate the income that is needed for the restoration and preservation of the building so we can continue to be a seat of learning and an inspiration for future engineers, architects and gardeners."

The house costs more than £100,000 a year to run – and that's without the extra repair bills a 400-year-old home is bound to generate. The south facade needs £100,000 of renovation to prevent decaying stone crashing on to the terrace, the attic roof requires a £100,000 revamp and there's another £100,000 worth of restoration waiting on the wall that surrounds the grounds.

The house was built around 1610 for weaving magnate John Hall. Its three-gable glazed south front is one of the reasons it has often been described as one of the West Country's finest houses. When the woollen industry fell into decline in the 19th century it was purchased by Stephen Moulton, who



The interior and exterior of The Hall its extensive gardens.

had picked up a pioneering process for the manufacture of rubber from his friend Charles Goodyear in the US.

He launched a business making rubber seals and other parts in the town and the wealth it generated paid for extensive refurbishment of the house. In 1891 a merger with engineer George Spencer led to the Spencer Moulton company being formed. In 1956 Spencer Moulton became part of the Avon Rubber Company and in 1992 the rubber industry left the town.

Alex Moulton, Stephen's great grandson, was the last member of the Moulton family in residence.

The curiosity among the people of the town to peep inside the gates drew more than 4,000 people to Easter open days but the fame of the creator of the Moulton bicycle spreads far wider.

Moulton's two-wheeled masterpiece is worshipped in Asia and tourists from the continent have for years made a pilgrimage to Bradford on Avon just to stand by the gates of the bicycle factory, which still operates from the grounds.

Christine sees limitless financial possibilities in exploiting this Moulton Mania. "They would like nothing more than to order their handmade bike and then fly over here to the Mecca of Moulton to see where they were conceived and built," she says.

Closer to home The Hall will be encouraging more school visits, hosting art and theatre productions and running guided tours every Friday and Saturday – with a pop-up ice cream parlour in the garage where Moulton kept his favourite Mini.

"We want to be a lot more open and provide a safe place for families to come and wander around the gardens," says Christine. "Alex was so passionate about his engineering and education and was quite clear that his home should be used to continue that work so we think this is the best way forward." WL

Dr Alex Moulton

ALEX Moulton CBE FREng was one of the most inventive and influential engineers of the 20th century.

Born in 1920 he was heavily influenced by the GWR steam trains that ran past the grounds of his family home and was still a teenager when he converted his first car to steam power.

During the Second World War he worked at the Bristol Aeroplane company and was an assistant to legendary engineer Roy Fedden. After the war he worked in the family rubber company and began designing rubber suspension for cars. He later met Alex Issigonis and began a working relationship that was to last decades.

His rubber suspension, first developed for the Morris Minor, was a key factor in the development of Issigonis' Mini, on which he also collaborated, from 1959.

By then he was already working on his own small-wheeled, intricately geared and lightweight bicycle. He had begun using a bike during the fuel shortages of the Suez crisis and become fascinated with them. After being given the cold shoulder by Raleigh he went alone, setting up the factory that still exists today in the grounds of the family home.

Although the Moulton bike was popular all over the world it was uneconomic to build and when, ironically, a Raleigh copy began outselling him he was forced to sell the patent to his rival. But he bought it back in 1974. Architect Norman Foster described it as representing "the greatest work of 20th-century British design".

He was awarded a CBE in 1976 for his services to engineering and continued to promote innovation, design and education. He died on December 9, 2012, and was mourned worldwide. His funeral at Holy Trinity Bradford on Avon was packed with 'Moultoneers' from across the globe.

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What is community and why is it *so important?*

Caroline Cary has been organising The Early, Early Christmas Fair (EECF) for the past 16 years. She explains that alongside its mission to raise funds for charity it is also about bringing people together.

THE EECF is one of the longest standing charity fairs in the country. It grows year on year and has become a flagship national event for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Last year the Platinum Jubilee EECF celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's glorious 70 years as Sovereign. We wanted not only to acknowledge her unwavering, selfless commitment to her country and people, but also to celebrate her work as the former patron of ABF - The Soldiers' Charity.

This year the theme is all about community. Community is so much more than where you live and who our neighbours are. It is more significant than that – it is about the tribe, common interests, a sense of belonging, everyday experiences which you share with others. The British Army family is not just about the local community but also about the nationwide one, which is why so many people travel far and wide to come to the event, to meet up with family and friends of long standing. You only have to hear the words "are you going to the 'Early Early'?" People know the event you are talking about. The network has a far reach and it creates and fosters lasting friendships regardless of where you live. Moreover, this event is important for Wiltshire, the army presence is huge and is Wiltshire's biggest single employer. If everyone were all home at the same time, the county would be home to 20 per cent of the entire British Army. Military life can take its toll on service members and military families. The county's support for its military community goes a long way to improve morale and operational readiness.

You never know who you will meet at the fair from Richard E Grant to Colin Thackery, but you will always find is a warm welcome.

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The Early Early Christmas Fair 2023

Tuesday September 26:
2pm – 9.30pm

Tuesday evening supper and reception: 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Wednesday September 27:
9.30am – 4pm

Tedworth Park, Tidworth,
Wiltshire SP9 7AH

Contact:
For more information, please call **Caroline Cary on 07818 090913** or email **carolinecary@gmail.com**

www.eecfair.org.uk

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From the team of volunteers to current and former soldiers the fair is a place to catch up with old friends.

Every year there is such a sense of togetherness at the fair, which creates a fun and exciting atmosphere. Each season you can feel it more and more and it is genuinely uplifting that so many loyal supporters and customers return each year. It is also heart-warming to see people who were posted locally then come back, even when they have moved to the other side of the country. It is that feeling of belonging, catching up and having an occasion designed with that purpose in mind. We always improve on what we do year on year in order to bring people together in the best setting, both to support one another and to enjoy a great day out.

The fair is one of the first events of the charity fair calendar and starts off the whole shopping season. Even though we are now more mindful of how we shop there is no getting away from it - shopping is still fun. According to studies, shopping causes your brain to release more serotonin, a feel-good chemical, which is why we are drawn to and engage it a bit of retail therapy! So there you have it. When you're in need of a bit of a lift, perhaps a little shopping with your friends for a good cause will be just what is needed.

The event takes place on the most glorious polo grounds adjacent to Tedworth House in Tidworth. Huge stunning marquees are erected the week before the event, lined, lit and warmed. Whatever the weather it is a welcoming space with the most glorious array of shopping. You'll find inspiring gifts and treats for everyone, including delicious food items; fashion and beauty products; personalised stationery, books and pictures; beautiful things for your home and garden; gifts for men and women, inspirational gifts for children and babies; Christmas decorations, stocking fillers and so much more.

The community is not just about the people who attend. The stallholders are a community in themselves, and they meet up regularly at these events. The joy and energy when all 120 of them arrive is electric and seeing them come together, transforming the marquees into the most fabulous shopping emporium, is nothing short of inspiring.

As the fair is in September, everyone is getting back work life and schools have all gone back after the summer, so there is a very special back-to business buzz throughout the event. It is a wonderful place to be and delightfully high-energy. The evening reception also gives the stallholders a chance to sit down and enjoy a delicious supper where they share their ideas and plans as a community.

Then there are the volunteers who look forward to coming every year. We could not stage such a charity event without them. Many are now retired, and it is wonderful to be able to see them have such a purpose surrounded by so many people, where they can contribute and make such a difference. Over the past few years it is believed that loneliness is on the increase and we are experiencing the side effects of this more than ever. In 2017 there was a project commissioned by The Eden Project, where they found that disconnected communities could be costing the economy more than £32 billion a year. In this research they discovered that eight out of the 10 people that took part in their projects would stay in touch.

Having a sense of community is an important part of a healthy society. It includes spirit, character, image, and pride. It's a sense that people in the community care about each other and that their needs will be met if they work hard and stick together. When we are part of a community, we can feel like we are a part of something bigger than ourselves. This community supports everyone including families, clubs, schools and small businesses.

Helping other people will make us feel better about ourselves and in turn helps those we help feel good about themselves. With so much stress in our fast-paced world, it's never been more important to help people who are having trouble with their mental and physical health. We yearn for deep connections with one another and a sense of community. Participation in the community makes people feel empowered and an improved sense of belonging gives them more control over their lives. This gives them the encouragement and impetus to make good changes. It's about making a difference for a group whose members care about it. Community matters.

Save the date and come join us – share with family and friends and let's keep the community space alive. WL

Advertorial

NAVIGATING INHERITANCE ACT CLAIMS
DISINHERITANCE AND DISAPPOINTED BENEFICIARIES

At Hugh James, we understand that dealing with will, inheritance and trust disputes can be incredibly stressful. In this article, we focus on one type of inheritance claim which can be brought against an estate when certain people are either disinherited (left out of a will) or receive less from an estate than others, and which can often cause problems for executors and beneficiaries.

Can someone be excluded from a will?

There are many reasons why someone may want to disinherit a relative or financial dependant or leave them less inheritance than others. For example there could be a family dispute or they may have lost contact with the person over time.

However, a wish to disinherit someone or leave them a smaller legacy than others in a will may not always be possible. In England and Wales, you can leave your estate to whoever you like (within reason) but it is important to note that wills can also be challenged, and claims can be made against an estate which may change how the estate will be distributed.

Inheritance (Provision for Family & Dependants Act) 1975.

The Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants Act) 1975 (the "Inheritance Act") allows certain close relatives and financial dependants to bring a claim against an estate for 'reasonable financial provision'.

A court will then decide whether the person making an Inheritance Act claim should receive either an inheritance, or a larger inheritance, if they are already a beneficiary under either the will, or under the Intestacy Rules (rules which decide how an estate will be distributed if there is no will).

Who can claim under the Inheritance Act?

Those who can claim include:

- A spouse or civil partner of the deceased;
- A former spouse or civil partner of the deceased (who has not remarried or entered into another civil partnership);
- A child of the deceased;
- Anyone who the deceased treated as their child e.g. a stepchild or grandchild;
- Certain cohabiting partners; or
- Anyone who was financially dependant upon the deceased at the time of the deceased's death.

What does a claimant receive under the Inheritance Act?

Each case is different and the sum or assets which might be awarded by a court will depend upon a number of factors. Qualifying as a claimant also does not automatically guarantee that a claim will either be successful, or that a person will receive either an inheritance or a greater share of an estate.

Is there a time limit for Inheritance Act Claims?

Yes. There is a 6-month time limit to bring an Inheritance Act claim (from the date of the grant of probate). After the time limit expires, a claimant needs the Court's permission to bring a claim and that is not always granted.

If you want to make an Inheritance Act claim, or are an executor or beneficiary dealing with this type of claim, it important to consider obtaining specialist independent legal advice as soon as possible.

Our specialist team has over 20 years' experience in helping clients to bring and defend Inheritance Act claims and also navigate will, trust and estate disputes.

We're here to help you to understand your legal rights and options, and also to provide the support and expert representation that you need.

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KING CHARLES III CORONATION • 6TH MAY 2023

The Coronation

the county celebrates

Captain enjoys his third Coronation

Royal Navy veteran Captain Bryan Butchard celebrated his 104th birthday just six weeks before sitting down to watch the coronation. Jane Sullivan reveals more about this remarkable gentleman.

CAPT BUTCHARD, who lives at the Amesbury Abbey retirement home, has seen the reign of five monarchs.

He witnessed King George V lying in state, followed by his funeral in 1936, and watched Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation procession along Oxford Street, at the time he was still serving in the navy, he was also present when she carried out a review of the Royal Navy's fleet in Portsmouth shortly afterwards.

Capt Butchard joined fellow Amesbury Abbey residents in a marquee on the lawn to watch the coronation of King Charles III on a big screen. "I enjoyed it very much," he said.

"I think His Majesty has made a wonderful start. He has got good presence, speaks well, and has a vast amount of knowledge. I'm sure it is going to be a wonderful reign."

Capt Butchard was born on March 25, 1919 and joined the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth as a cadet aged just 13 in 1932.

He was on board HMS Iron Duke during King George V's Silver Jubilee Review in 1935.

Capt Butchard worked his way up through the ranks to become second-in-command of the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Magpie. His duties involved defending merchant convoys and destroying the German U-boats which threatened them.

"I felt no hostility to the German Navy personnel and respected the largely doomed U-boat crews, whom I considered to be the bravest of the brave," he said.

"After one successful 'kill' by the 2nd Support Group in February 1944, the crew were rescued and imprisoned temporarily on our ship. I offered the captured U-boat commander, a veteran submariner called Hartwig Looks, the temporary use of a cabin and we would walk on deck together in the evenings.

"Our friendship survived the conflict and Looks twice visited me in the UK after his retirement from the post-war German Navy."

Capt Butchard married Patricia Tonks in 1944 and the couple spent 65 years together until Pat's death in 2007.

Now enjoying a long and peaceful retirement in Amesbury, Capt Butchard retains his abiding love for the Wiltshire countryside, "through which I have walked tirelessly for 40 years, accompanied by a long succession of well-loved dogs".

Captain Bryan Butchard enjoying the Coronation at Amesbury Abbey. Inset: Capt Butchard as a young officer.

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Capturing The King

Being asked to paint the first commissioned portrait of The King is an honour, but with it comes pressure, as Mary-Vere Parr discovers when she meets the artist who only had two weeks to complete the painting.

MOONRAKERS UP in town for the Coronation wandering the flag-bedecked streets of Piccadilly might have spied, in the window of the Bollinger Bar in Burlington Arcade, a new portrait of King Charles III.

The white-haired figure with the watery-blue eyes and a half smile on his lips is, of course, instantly familiar. But who is the artist?

Alastair Barford, is a Somerset-born portraitist now living in Wiltshire, studying and teaching at the Sarum Studio in Salisbury Cathedral Close. This is his second royal portrait. In 2015, *Illustrated London News* commissioned the QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) scholar to paint the late Queen Elizabeth II to mark her becoming Britain's longest serving monarch. When it came to commissioning the first portrait of King Charles, it turned to Barford once again.

“As a portrait painter, there is perhaps no greater honour than being asked to paint a sitting monarch,” Barford says. To be asked twice, to paraphrase Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, looks like success?

But far from basking in the limelight, Barford ran for the hills. After painting the late Queen, he left the country, partly to finish his studies in Florence, partly to dodge the media. He also deleted his email.

“I am temperamentally not cut out for the social aspects of a portraitist,” he says. “I find all the attention creates anxiety and self-doubt.” Royal portraiture ups the anti on an already challenging process.

How hard was it to paint the King? “It was a terrifying honour!” he says. “It's a great responsibility to create a portrait of someone who means so much to so many people. If you are painting someone you know, you bring to the portrait certain preconceptions. While I don't know the King, he has been an enduring presence in all our lives. So reconciling this ‘Idea of The King’ with the reference material I had gathered was a challenge.”

For someone who finds bouquets as hard to deal with as brickbats, knowing a royal portrait will be seen and freely commented upon across the world is also tricky. “The praise [for the Queen's portrait] felt undeserved,” Barford says. “I didn't feel in any way ready for it.”

> ‘I find all the attention creates anxiety and self-doubt’

This time round he is – a little – more sanguine. Back in 2015 Barford was just finishing his third year at the Charles H Cecil Studio in Florence. Eight years on, after continuing to study traditional portrait drawing and painting with Nicholas Beer at the Sarum Studio, perhaps Barford feels he is mastering his craft? “I still have so much to learn,” he smiles.

But is he more at ease with the attention a royal portrait brings? “It's with regret that I now feel like I've spent more time talking about the paintings than I had working on them,” he responds. Maybe not, then. But he endures my questions with good grace as we sit on a bench in the Sarum Studio garden, catching the sun in a rare moment between showers.

With some trepidation, I ask if Barford is pleased with the portrait? “I am pleased I managed to complete something in the time,” he admits carefully. “I wish it had been less of an impossible task.”

Barford was given just an hour and a half to observe the King at a global biodiversity reception at Buckingham Palace on February 17. He then had just two weeks to complete the portrait in time for it to feature on the front cover of *The Illustrated Coronation Edition*, published on March 30.

It's not the way he is used to working. “In my private practice, I work from life and have the luxury of having the model sit directly in front of me, for however long it takes – up to 40 hours,” Barford says.

He took a sketchbook to Buckingham Palace but found the crowds around the royal progress jostled him out of the way. Barford resorted to taking “about 600 photos” of The King on his phone, the only camera he was allowed, to capture his likeness. “I tried to observe The King's mannerisms and how he held himself.”

Then came the challenge of actually painting the portrait. “Working on a single portrait all day every day is intense,” he says. So intense that, on his wife's birthday, Barford just gave her her present then hurried back to his easel. “I felt guilty when I wasn't working but I came to realise how important the time that you spend not painting but thinking about the painting is,” he says. “You need to step back and process what you are doing.”

The tight time frame also presented technical challenges. “To work on an oil painting every day is like picking at a wound. The painting needs time to dry, just as the wound needs time to heal.”

Nevertheless, Barford succeeded in producing a classic three-quarter view, in the style of an Old Master. But he decided to strip away the traditional royal regalia and focus on capturing something of the man behind the role.

He painted the late Queen in her Order of the Garter robes, referencing the famous

Left: Alastair Barford in the Sarum Studio

1955 Pietro Annigoni painting. By contrast, King Charles III appears in a blue suit, immaculately tailored but with the informal addition of a bracelet visible on his left wrist. Given by the Amazon indigenous leader, Domingo Peas, to the King at the Palace reception on February 17, it symbolizes The King's advocacy on climate change and sustainability.

Barford also brings out the humanity of his subject. "There is a vulnerability in having a portrait painted," he says. "I see my responsibility to convey the subject as sympathetically as possible. To this end, the expression on The [King's] face was very important to me.

"I wished to capture his warmth and sensitivity, the empathy which came across in his interactions with the people he met," Barford says. "It was important that I captured a sympathetic expression."

Intimidating as it was to be in the gallery of Buckingham Palace with the walls lined with royal portraits, Barford is painting in a tradition stretching back to Joshua Reynolds in the 18th century.

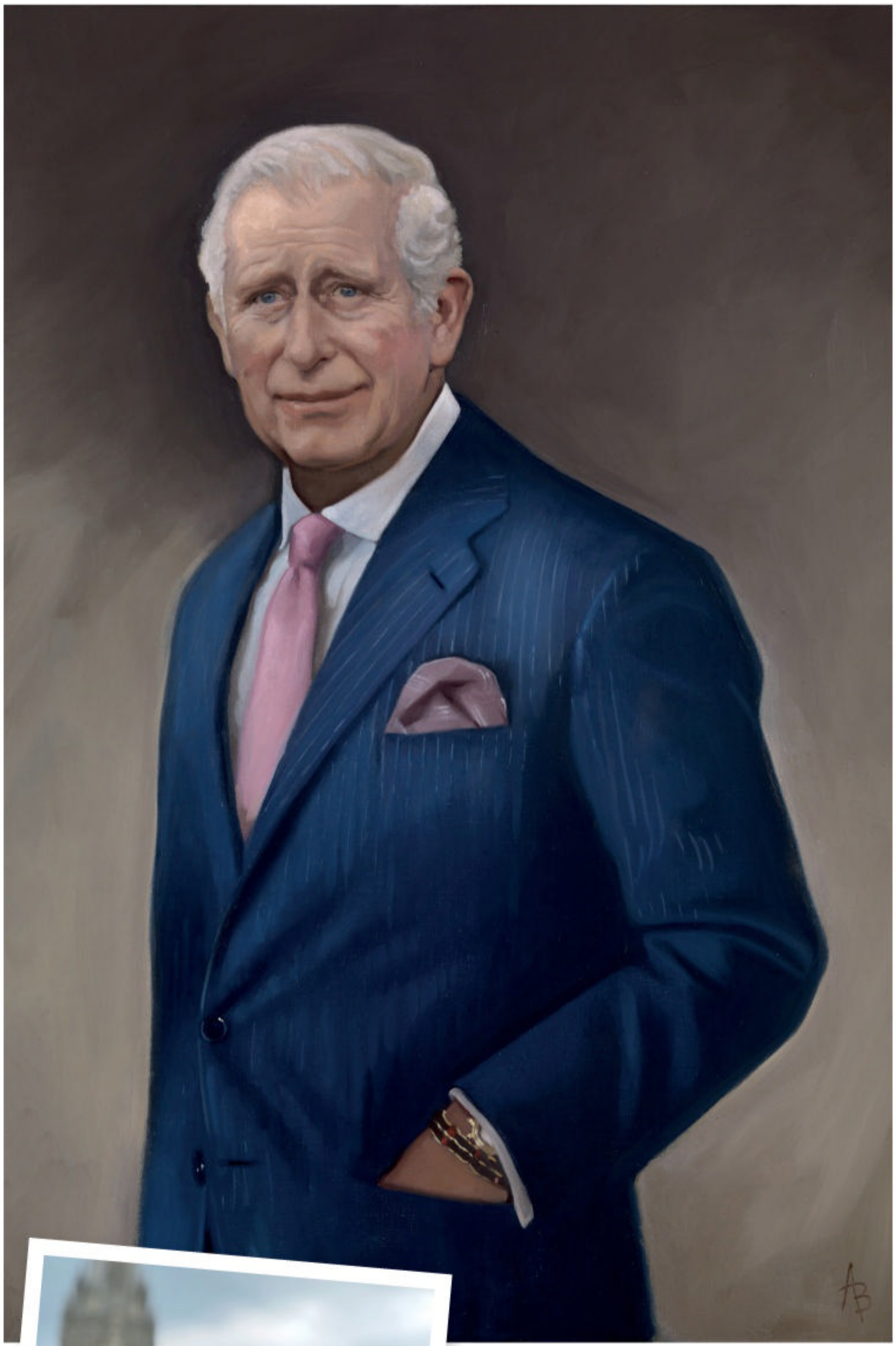
Using the sight-size technique, when the artist's easel is set up alongside the model and the artist moves up to and away from the canvas, Barford focuses on the overall structure of his work. At the same time, details can completely alter the expression and the feeling of the painting. "John Singer Sargent defined a portrait as 'a painting with something wrong with the mouth'," he says. "The mouth was certainly one of the more challenging aspects of the portrait."

Portraiture is an exacting discipline. "I am a perpetual student," Barford admits. But it suits his tendency to be "quietly observing, not really getting that involved" and is the foundation of all his practice. "I thought if I could learn to master portraiture, the skills I had acquired would be transferable to other disciplines such as landscape or still life," he says. He has also studied sculpture to improve his observational drawing.

In contrast to the royal portraiture that has made his name or the commissions he undertakes, I sense that Barford is happiest with his current project painting portraits of the refugees he has met though the Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group. He knows their potential power and plans an exhibition. "We have become shockingly desensitized to photographs of human suffering," he says. "Portraits demand attention."

Before I go, I grab my own snatched portrait of the artist on my phone, foregrounded against the familiar Cathedral backdrop. This landmark is a subject for Barford too who is working on 36 Cathedral views, "a meditation on form". WL

Top right: Alastair's portrait of The King commissioned by London Illustrated News; Right: Alastair in Salisbury Cathedral Close



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Information

The portrait of King Charles III by Alastair Barford (www.alastairbarford.co.uk) is held in the collection of the Royal Warrant Holders Association (www.royalwarrant.org) who founded QEST (www.qest.org.uk) in 1990 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the association and the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. The charity supports traditional craftsmanship. In 2017, the former Prince of Wales became its Patron.

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Buckingham Palace
Image: David Betteridge

The Queen's quiet confidante

When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, she had six maids of honour, but Queen Camilla chose just two people to be by her side – her sister and her dearest friend the Marchioness of Lansdowne. Mary Vere-Parr talked to her about her role and the importance of their friendship.

IT WAS a huge honour and a testament to a very long friendship," Lady Lansdowne says, as she takes a break from packing her car for a long-postponed holiday.

"We've been through so much together over the years and it was just wonderful to be able to support her on an incredibly important day."

That day, was, of course, May 6 2023, the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Lady Lansdowne was, with Annabel Elliot, the Queen's sister, one of two ladies in attendance, processing behind the Queen down the aisle of Westminster Abbey, sitting next to her during the service and standing behind her as she was crowned.

The ladies in attendance also made an unexpected appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. "We only knew we were going on the balcony one minute before," Lady Lansdowne told Kirsty Young when interviewed in the BBC pod outside Buckingham Palace on Saturday evening. "They didn't tell us or the boys. It was a little gift." It was also necessary to have the pages carry the fragile trains: "Neither The King nor The Queen could move without the pages."

After being quietly by her friend's side for four decades, Lady Lansdowne was front and centre at the Coronation. "A central and essential role," said Kirsty Young when she interviewed Lady Lansdowne in the BBC pod outside Buckingham Palace on Saturday evening. "Definitely not a starring role," replied Lady Lansdowne, looking down modestly. "We were very much there to support."

Lady Lansdowne has supported Queen Camilla through thick and thin, memorably rescuing her and her children from Middlewick House, Corsham, when, in the aftermath of the then Prince and Princess of Wales's separation, the press besieged the Parker Bowles's home. "There were cameras up against all her windows," she recalls.

So, what was it like being so close to the action on a day beamed live to 20 million people in the UK? In fact, the day was something of a blur for Lady Lansdowne who opted not to wear her glasses. "We all decided that we would look better without our glasses on," she says. "Actually, it was rather nice having a slight haze throughout the Abbey so I could focus on the immediate task. From within, you see what's around you more than the whole pageant."

Her task was to make sure the Queen was comfortable and to take care of her robes and train, including removing and folding Her Majesty's robe of state. The two ladies in attendance had spent the week before the Coronation rehearsing every day, sometimes with The King and Queen, more often with stand-ins, so that they got their parts right.

On the day, nearly everything went to plan. It began early with a car from "a certain location in London" to Buckingham Palace in time for a 7.30am breakfast. The ladies in attendance repaired to a room next door to where the Queen was also getting ready. "We didn't rush in and out (to see her), she just needed to be very calm," Lady Lansdowne recalls.

A "very trusted" hairdresser and "lovely make-up lady" set to work before the ladies stepped into their dresses, designed by the Queen's dressmaker Fiona Clare. "She made the whole process of making those dresses enormous fun and took so much trouble to make sure they fitted beautifully," Lady Lansdowne says. "We wanted to look like the individual, mature women that we are, not like bridesmaids, so they were different but similar." Lady Lansdowne wore an ivory cloque (embossed) silk gown with silver braiding, accessorised with a large diamond brooch with Queen Camilla's cipher above.

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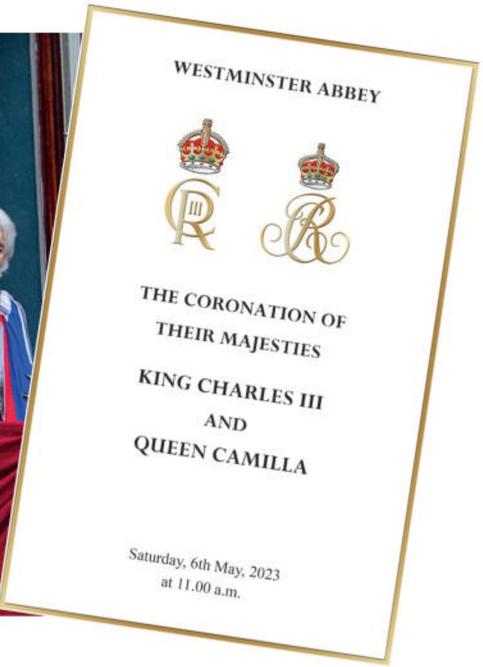


WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THE CORONATION OF
THEIR MAJESTIES
KING CHARLES III
AND
QUEEN CAMILLA

Saturday, 6th May, 2023
at 11.00 a.m.

An unforgettable moment, standing on the balcony with the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace.

There was a slight hitch as the car taking the ladies in attendance down Birdcage Walk to Westminster Abbey was held up. "We should have been there waiting as the King and Queen arrived," Lady Lansdowne recalls, "But we got caught behind another vehicle, so it was a little bit of a scramble."

The rain did not help. "It was a little challenging," Lady Lansdowne admits. "We got wet as we arrived, we got wet as we left, and we got wet on the balcony. But nothing really showed and, by some miracle of hairdressing, my hair held!" The bottoms of their dresses were black, but they are being cleaned before being put on display in Buckingham Palace for the summer opening.

Once inside the Abbey, all went to plan. Entering to Hubert Parry's *I was Glad*, Lady Lansdowne was hit by the uplifting wave of sound. Was she nervous? "I think everybody was nervous," she says. "But the Queen was very cool and collected. Possibly, (she was) a little apprehensive because to have a crown put on your head and then to stand up and walk across to curtsy to your husband is quite a thing."

But there were "no surprises" and "it all went beautifully". "The service was a combination of something very medieval and yet very modern that was so cleverly done," Lady Lansdowne says. "They updated it yet kept that extraordinary pageantry."

However carefully rehearsed, the actual occasion was still very emotional. Lady Lansdowne recalls her goosebumps as they left the sanctuary to *God Save the King*. "To hear everyone singing at the top of their voices and willing The King on in a wonderful way was a spine-tingling moment," she says. "But I think the thing that will remain with me the most is seeing The King, who is a very spiritual person, kneeling in front of the altar, stripped to a linen shirt and then slowly dressed with those extraordinary golden robes. You could see how moved he was by the whole experience. To see the building of a King, to be as close as I was, was a wonderful privilege."

At the end of the service, the ladies in attendance helped The King and Queen into the Gold State Coach before travelling back to Buckingham Palace by car to receive their Majesties. "The Queen's children and their families were there to greet them with all the household. It was a lovely moment."

> 'It was the most wonderful feeling of pride and joy and noise'

Then followed the official portraits, including one of The King and Queen with the ladies in attendance and the pages of honour, the oldest of whom was Nicholas Barclay, grandson of Wiltshire's Lord Lieutenant, Sarah Rose Troughton, who also attended the service with her husband, Peter. "Nicholas was marvellous, very responsible and very sweet with the younger children, who, in between the serious rehearsals, got up to all sorts of things!" Lady Lansdowne laughs. "A cause for more Wiltshire pride."

Both Lady Lansdowne and Sarah Troughton were appointed Queen's companions last year, while their husbands are old friends of The King. The Marquess of Lansdowne sat behind Queen Camilla's family in Westminster Abbey, in sight of his wife and wearing the robes normally on display in the exhibition room at Bowood House. Over the Coronation weekend, a "Gone to London" sign went up in their place, but the robes are now back at Bowood to be joined in due course by Lady Lansdowne's dress.

The official day ended with the surprise balcony appearance. "The excitement of the crowd was just palpable," Lady Lansdowne recalls. "It was just the most wonderful feeling of pride and joy and noise." She had never expected to be there and, like the pages, will never forget the experience, nor picking her way to the balcony through the scaffolding of the Buckingham Palace renovations.

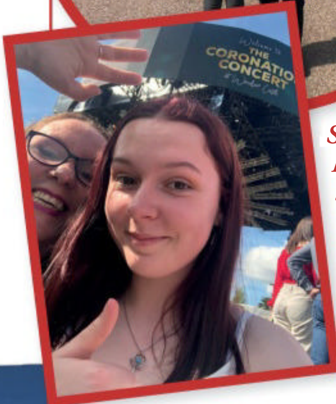
But the day was not over for Lady Lansdowne who left the palace at 4pm to go home to quickly change before her BBC interview. "I was more nervous about doing that than the Coronation," she admits.

And then she and her husband travelled back to Wiltshire to attend a church service on Sunday followed by a small picnic for 300 at Bowood. The weather finally obliged and "it was very nice to be made to feel so special by local friends in the village". She has also received emails from friends and family all around the world.

Not surprisingly, Lady Lansdowne had "a bit of a flop" on the bank holiday Monday before heading off to Devon for the holiday that she had promised herself in March after finishing her year as High Sheriff of Wiltshire. Here - finally – she got to see the Coronation: "I'm going to sit down quietly and just watch the whole thing on television," she says. I just hope she remembered her glasses.

A night with *the stars*

A star-studded coronation concert took place in the grounds of Windsor Castle, tickets for the event were free, with many of those receiving an invitation through their work as volunteers or through charities. Sue Rawlins, Iain Hatt and Joanna Eamey share their experiences of the event.



Sue and Faith Rawlins received their tickets through the Youth Adventure Trust. Here is their account of the day:

We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves as we drove to Windsor with the help of the sat nav finding the parking very easily. There were buggies transporting concert-goers along the Long Walk, it was wonderful, very picturesque. We joined the queue with many other excited attendee's, being reminded regularly to have our tickets and identification ready. Once through the security process we headed to the staging area where so many people had already staked their claim as to where they were sitting on the grass. The atmosphere was wonderful, particularly for my daughter who had not been to an event like this before. There were so many friendly people, we instantly made friends and discussed where we had travelled from and performers we wanted to see, borrowing well needed sun cream and watching each other's belongings when the someone went for food, water, and bathroom breaks.

The first responders and paramedic teams were so helpful, the volunteers who collected the rubbish before also did a fantastic job.

The warm-up acts were really good, Scott Mills from Radio 2 was absolutely brilliant. The main acts blew our minds Olly Murs, Lang Lang, Lucy Illingworth, Andrea Bocelli, Take That, Katy Perry, Paloma Faith, and Lionel Richie. It was all so overwhelming and yet so fantastic.

Once the evening was finished, we left the grounds and walked back to where the buggies dropped us off and returned to our car. We made our way home tired, wired and weary but we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We spent the next day recuperating as we were very tired, sunburnt and dehydrated even though we were reminded regularly to hydrate. It was a day to remember.

Iain Hatt, principal and CEO Wiltshire College & University Centre:

It was with great pleasure that I was able to attend the first ever public concert to take place at Windsor Castle to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Windsor Castle was a stunning historical setting for the concert, with the large union jack shaped stage on the east side of the castle which lit up as it got dark.

The concert was a fantastic celebration of the King's love of the environment, music, theatre and art. My favourite moment was the drone show of wildlife in the sky above the castle along with the song *Don't You Forget About Me.*

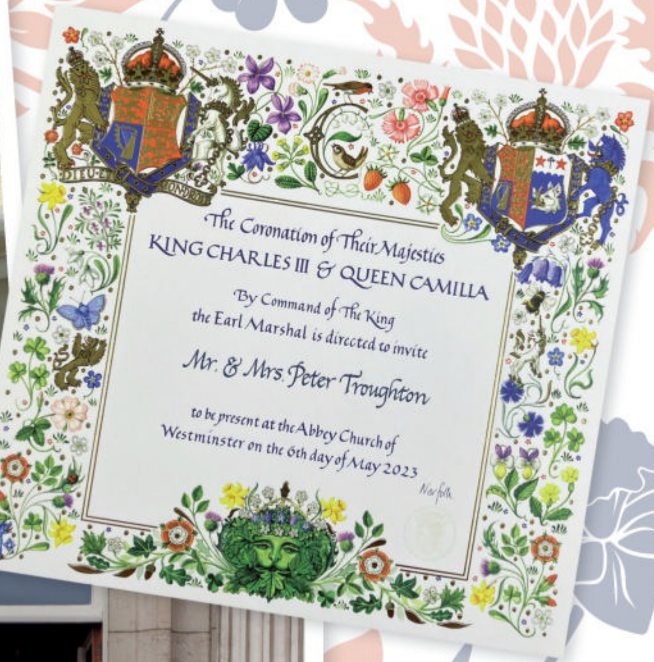
I am very grateful for the opportunity to have attended this unique and unforgettable evening, providing an opportunity to witness history in the making and participate in the grand celebration of the new monarch's reign. Thank you.

Joanna Eamey, Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service (Swindon Women's Aid)

The concert was amazing and trying to decide on personal highlights is really difficult. The sound of the Coronation Choir was incredible, and it gave me goosebumps when they all came in together, the illuminated wristbands were a wonderful way to get the whole crowd involved, including in the Royal Box where everyone was on their feet dancing to Lionel Richie.

I didn't know beforehand about the drone light show, which was so spectacular, and there was a collective gasp from the crowd when it started. Lastly, the police and stewards deserve huge thanks – they were so cheerful, polite and kind throughout the queuing in and out of the castle grounds.

A huge thank you to the Lord Lieutenant for nominating me for the tickets. It was a very special experience to be part of the coronation celebrations.



The Coronation of Their Majesties
KING CHARLES III & QUEEN CAMILLA
By Command of The King
the Earl Marshal is directed to invite
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Troughton
to be present at the Abbey Church of
Westminster on the 6th day of May 2023
Norfolk

Days of duty and delight

For Sarah Troughton, the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla meant a diary packed full of events to attend, duties to fulfil and at the same time a family moment in history to cherish. Here she shares her diary of this unique experience.

BY THE time you read this the Coronation of King Charles III and the celebrations will be well over. I have been invited to give a snapshot of memories of an extraordinary weekend both in London and in Wiltshire.

We were honoured to be at one of the great historic occasions this decade and were about to witness Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla herald in a new reign.

On Saturday May 6 we were in London with many, many others. The alarm went off at 5.30am. My husband Peter and I, dressed in our best outfits – a new tie for him and medals and a blue hat for me – we were driven to Lambeth Bridge where we joined the queue to get through security and into the magnificent Westminster Abbey.

The queue was building up so it was worth the early start and everyone was chatting and taking photographs in the sunshine. We were seated in the north transept by 7.30am, so we were in for a long wait till the service began, but time flies when you are listening to the peal of bells, magnificent organ and orchestral music and beautiful singing.

HM The King had chosen music from many centuries, from Byrd to Bach, from Holst to Handel and from a number of contemporary composers - Sir Bryn Terfel sang in Welsh a work composed by Paul Mealor (born 1975) and the choir an anthem by Debbie Wiseman (born 1963).We caught glimpses of the grand processions of foreign royalty, of faith leaders, the members of the Commonwealth, the members of the Royal family, the heralds, the Coronation regalia, The crowns on velvet cushions, the orb and sceptre elegantly carried to the altar by eminent dignitaries. Our grandson was one of the pages to HM The King. What greater honour could there be for those eight serious, focused, responsible young chaps who looked so smart and so proud. They were dressed as soldiers and had been instructed to behave like soldiers and we thought they fulfilled their brief admirably. We were of course also thrilled to see HM The Queen's sister Mrs Annabel Elliot and The Marchioness of Lansdowne as Queen's Companions escorting Her Majesty throughout the service.

There were good televisions on pillars in the abbey, so we felt part of the service in all its seriousness, profundity and holiness and it was deeply moving.

One bumps fairly quickly back to normal life trying to get home to Wiltshire - the nearby tubes were closed so in the pouring rain we trudged back on foot to Victoria, ruining a pair of shoes and a rather nice hat!

On Sunday May 7, it was Wiltshire and Swindon's turn to celebrate and what a wonderful day we had. First we joined a truly joyous Coronation Service at a packed Christchurch in Swindon led by Rev Simon Stevenette which was filled with singing, and loyal prayers and of course two verses of the *National Anthem*.

A quick dash to Marlborough where the widest High Street in the country was taken over for a Big Lunch. Opened by the mayor, Cllr Nicholas Fogg, the civic party led by the town crier and the town council and new High Sheriff Pradeep Bhardwaj processed down the street lined from top to bottom with tables laid up for some serious partying. We met hundreds of local friends and happy families settling down for wonderful picnics, complete with coronation cakes, bunting and champagne. The MP Danny Kruger was there and his mother Prue Leith, and there were

MINT VELVET
JIGS

From top: On the day after the Coronation, in her role as Lord-Lieutenant, Sarah Troughton attended a service at Salisbury Cathedral and joined the mayor of Marlborough, Nicholas Fogg at the town's giant street party; Lady Lansdowne back at home at Bowood shares an image of their Big Coronation Lunch.

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From top: Attending the coronation service at Salisbury Cathedral; HRH Princess Anne meets the mayor of Swindon Abdul Amin and the High Sheriff Pradeep Bhardwaj; The Princess handed out coronation gifts; Bob Sanderson, Adam Vickery, and Sarah Troughton.

stilt walkers and hoola hoopers. The atmosphere was joyous, enthusiastic and patriotic. Lord-Lieutenant Cadet Sergeant Macy Thompson accompanied us. We sang two verses of the *National Anthem* of course, before we headed north again.

Meanwhile, towns and villages all over the county were having parties and everyone will have their own memories - Mrs Ninna Gibson DL joined in the fun at a tug-of-war in Mildenhall, Robert and Pats Floyd opened the garden at Great Chalfield for people to enjoy picnics. At Derry Hill the whole community had a major clean – up of the village and Lord and Lady Lansdowne and family hosted a Big Lunch for hundreds at Bowood.

Back in our car we returned to Swindon where we were absolutely delighted to welcome HRH The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence who were joining a Big Lunch in Belmont Crescent, Old Town hosted by Jeremy Holt and friends the High Sheriff Mr Pradeep Bhardwaj, the mayor of Swindon councillor Abdul Amin, MP Sir Robert Buckland, police and crime commissioner Philip Wilkinson and deputy chief constable Paul Mills were present. Jeremy Holt and his committee introduced HRH to almost everyone in the crescent including lots of children who were presented with a Coronation tin filled with memorabilia of the day.

We hopped back in the car, looking nervously at our watches and drove down to Salisbury Cathedral for a grand and very uplifting civic Coronation service, the sort of service that the Cathedral do so well. We made it,with three minutes to spare, to be met at the north door by the Dean Rt Rev, Nicholas Papadopulos. I am escorted by Ld.Lt Cadet staff sergeant Nadia Cavanagh and we are joined by of the outgoing mayor of Salisbury Cllr Tom Corbin, the High Sheriff Mr Pradeep Bardwaj, the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mr Angus Campbell and the High Sheriff, the Bishop of Sherborne and friends. The Precentor has chosen music entirely apt for a Coronation. The choir sang *I Was Glad* by Hubert Parry, the organ played the *Coronation March:Crown Imperial* and also *Orb and Sceptre* by William Walton, we sang *All My Hope on God is Founded* and the Bishop of Ramsbury Rt Rev Andrew Rumsey preached a fine sermon. Singing two verses of the *National Anthem* for the third time in eight hours felt completely natural.

It is always fun chatting to friends and colleagues at the end of a service and Dr Phil Harding DL who had escorted the mayor throughout Salisbury all day and Helen Birchenough DL along with Rev.Canon Kelvin Inglis rector of St Thomas's church and his wife Helen were with us too.

Home to a simple supper to watch the Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle. Nine lucky and energetic couples from Wiltshire were there; I was concerned how they would get to Windsor let alone get back home, but they did and it was a huge success. One concert-goer told me that the greatest honour for her was turning to face the Royal Box as HM The King arrived and singing the *National Anthem*, just one verse this time, to her new Monarch.

On Monday May 8, it was time for the Big Help Out, the day chosen to encourage people to volunteer in whatever way they feel able. We went to Dauntsey Lock where a new defribillator donated by St John Ambulance was being dedicated at the Top Fitness gym. Mr Bob Sanderson from St John was there with Adam Vickery who received a certificate for 1,000 hours of volunteering in a year. This initiative encouraged by HM The Queen was a lovely way of finishing off a weekend of unadulterated joy, of emotion and pride and one that Peter and I will never forget.

I am honoured indeed to be His Majesty's representative in Wiltshire and thank everyone who joined in the pleasures of this historic weekend. WL

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Scan to book online or visit **salisburycathedral.org.uk**

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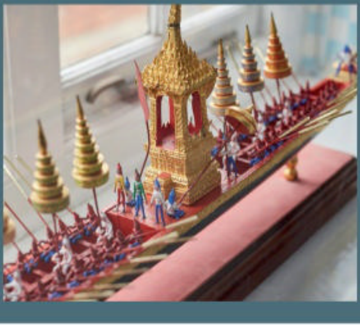
Salisbury Cathedral and Magna Carta



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A royal recognition

Springboard Chippenham, a pre-school for under-fives with additional needs, faces growing pressure to find the money to keep on providing its services in the face of rising demand and costs. Gary Lawrence met its manager, Jane Boulton, who through her dedication to children received an invitation to the Coronation.

THERE IS a sign on the wall of a corridor that reads 'once you learn to appreciate small victories there is no need for a finish line' and nothing seems to sum up the ethos better of a pre-school that takes pride in giving its young charges the simple gift of joy.

Stand in that corridor and you can hear the same shrieks of happy laughter, clatter of excitable feet and exuberant yells you'd hear in the playground of any pre-school – and that's a testament to what manager Jane Boulton and her team strive for.

Since 1976 the charity has supported children with a variety of conditions, but not only the children, its centre in Lodge Road, Pewsham, is a depository of knowledge, shoulder to cry on, place of respite or home from home for parents, grandparents and siblings.

Its children are mostly referred by health professionals but often desperate and anxious parents, who can see their child is not developing as they think they should, will ring asking for help. Once accepted, and children as young as one month old are taken in, the family is enveloped with support and guidance – but the children are at the centre of every aspect of that care.

"Children are the best teachers and their parents are the ones who have all that knowledge about them from

Left: Springboard Chippenham manager Jane Boulton at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation.

birth," says Jane. "Some of my proudest moments have been when I've written parents a thank you note when their child leaves. They thank us back and tell us they have learned so much from working with us. It shows that it's not just what we do, everything we achieve is by working together with other people."

Springboard has been in Pewsham since 2010 and at first shared its centre with SureStart Children's Centre. But it took over most of the building, which is owned by Wiltshire Council, when the SureStart's moved out. It has two playrooms, a sensory room and a beautifully equipped £60,000 outdoor play area that the charity raised funds for over two years. There is also a sensory garden complete with a gazebo for parents to meet in.

Its children endure a range of conditions, including autism, Down's Syndrome, sensory and development disorders, as well as physical disabilities. One thing generally unites them all.

"All the children, whatever their primary needs or diagnosis, have a communication difficulty and that's why we talk about it so much," says Jane. "Without that fundamental building block in place, everything else becomes a bit more of a challenge to access.

> 'Everything we achieve is by working together with other people'

"Parents ask me 'will they ever talk?'. We don't have a magic wand, so we can't give that prediction but we can say they will become a good communicator because we will put things in place."

Staff are trained to use Makaton sign language and a Picture Exchange Communications System, or PECS. It uses simple visuals to help the children make themselves understood. The staff help parents use both to bring them closer to their children and give them confidence in understanding what they need. Communication is the key to everything because greater understanding leads to better relationships and that's where those small victories occur.

"It's wonderful when parents tell us they've been able to take the children to McDonald's or to a family gathering," says Jane. "They are things we can all take for granted but with a child who has additional needs, where there can be a meltdown over the smallest thing, parents can often feel unable to go out and that isolates them."

Just as key is the support for the wider family. Mums and dads are invited in regularly for Cuppa and Chat sessions to foster unofficial support networks between them. Because families can be isolated they can be unaware that there is another family with similar issues right on their doorstep.

Youngsters at play at Springboard Chippenham; Inset: Springboard Chippenham manager Jane Boulton in the pre-school's sensory garden.

King for the day at Springboard.

Saturdads is, as the name suggests, a monthly meet-up for dads, who can often be left out of the equation because they are at work. "They come in and play with the children and do activities but they can also chat. I've had dads crying with me because they've bottled things up and think they have to be strong," says Jane.

Many of the children also attend other nursery schools so Springboard works closely with them to share its knowledge and support. "We have some excellent partners in early years settings, and I really need to say that really strongly because the early years sector is on its knees and we are in a crisis in terms of people leaving the sector," says Jane. "They have worked out they can get a bit more money in other jobs and pre-schools are struggling with retention and recruitment.

"What we ultimately want is good mainstream pre-schools and nurseries that can support our children, we don't want it all just to be in Springboard."

Everything offered to parents is free and although a contract with the council currently brings in £75,000 a year it leaves a huge shortfall in what the care it provides actually costs. Jane and her team need to raise more than £130,000 a year – a job that needs to be done on top of all the planning and care put into looking after 60 children on average a week.

And that number could be higher. "Referrals have grown exponentially this year, we have been managing a waiting list of about 30, which is unheard of for us," says Jane. "Partly it's on the back of the lockdown because children and families weren't being seen by health visitors. There is also earlier identification of issues that people are able to do and we have people moving into the area, especially military families.

"In September we've got children moving on to school so we're offering places. But if a child is six months old and referred in June and we've got a place in September, they should not have to be waiting another three months."

Although those pressures may be growing on the outside, within the playrooms there's nothing but joy and love. Says Jane: "We have no magic wands or magic answers but we have a great big sign as you come in the door that says 'welcome' and when people come through that door we want them to go out feeling the difference. That for me is so important because if we don't get people through the door, it doesn't matter how brilliant we can be, we're not going to make that difference."

She tells the story of the father of a little boy who was struggling with dreadful conditions. "One day the dad took time off work and came," she recalls. "He did a painting with his little boy and when he left as he walked through the double doors he said 'see ya, I've done a painting with my boy, isn't that amazing?'.

"That is my lasting memory of that dad because the next time I saw him was at his son's funeral.

"I know that that day painting with his little boy was one of his memories of his son and that was made by pure chance because he took the time off to come. None of us knew what was going to happen and it's the most normal thing to paint with your child and go home with a painting – and that was precious for him. And we made that difference."

Another day, another small victory. WL

- *Find out more about the charity, its services or how to help at springboardchippenham.co.uk.*

Springboard manager Jane Bolton was awarded a British Empire Medal last New Year for her contribution to children – an unexpected consequence of which was an invitation to the Coronation.

"I had an email at work from the Cabinet Office," she recalls. "At first I thought it was a survey about being a medal winner and then when I realised what it was I was thinking 'no way, how is this possible?' I had to tell my husband Kris he couldn't umpire at cricket that day."

Her first decision over outfits was whether to wear her medal. "I'd already lost it once in a car park in Bath when I was at my son's PGCE graduation so I was a bit nervous," she says.

Invitees had to be assembled in Westminster Abbey by 7.30am, which meant an overnight hotel stay and very little breakfast. "I didn't have a lot so towards the end of the ceremony my stomach was rumbling, and it was resonating through the crowd," she says.

Initially she found herself seated next to Stephen Fry, with whom she shared a chat about cricket and pork pies. She was even more surprised when she discovered who was sitting the other side of her. "He introduced himself as Tim and when I asked where he was from he said Avebury, it was amazing," she recalls. Her seatmate was in fact Swindon Borough councillor Tim Swinyard!

It was only as the ceremony drew near that she and Tim discovered they were in the wrong section and had to move. "On the way I walked past Kenneth Branagh and then Lionel Richie. He said 'hello' and we said how amazing it all was and then I said 'look at all these famous people' – like he wasn't famous."

They spotted Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire Sarah Troughton and went to introduce themselves. "We wanted her to know Wiltshire was well represented," she said.

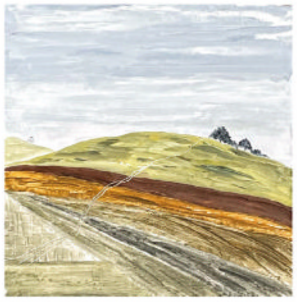
"When it all started happening and the atmosphere changed it was incredible and we were both asking ourselves 'is this really happening?' it just seemed so unbelievable to be there when history was being made. The serenity of it all took your breath away and at the same time there was The King, and all these famous people like President Macron were there and they I was think 'they are all in the same room as us'.

"We saw the crown going on to The King's head, we were close enough to feel part of it. There were loads of 'pinch me' moments and I think Tim and I will have reunions to remember it all."

Amid all the pomp and ceremony she found time to think of her own family. "My grandad was a postman and I can remember him proudly polishing the ER badge on his cap, I used to think he worked for The Queen. I thought a lot about him and my grandmother and how proud they would have been."

The event was sandwiched between Jane and Kris' wedding anniversary and her birthday. She says: "The next day I was in Lidl buying stuff for a barbecue and thinking 'did it really happen?'"

Jane Boulton found herself by chance sitting next to Swindon Borough councillor Tim Swinyard from Avebury.



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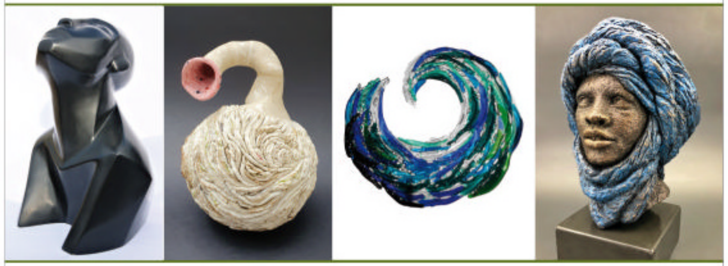

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The county *celebrates*

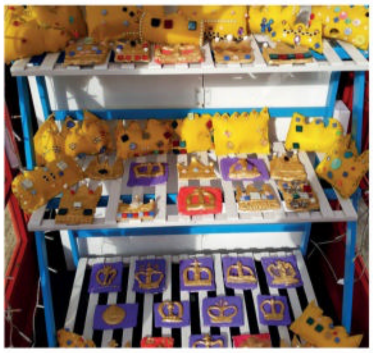
From street parties and picnics to church services and creative crafting, we share how Wiltshire marked the crowning of our new King and Queen.

Aldbourne

Patriotic Labrador Bramble Crisp thoroughly enjoyed watching the historic event

Ashton Keynes

There was a special Coronation display in the village Telephone Gallery. Every child at Ashton Keynes Church of England Primary School made a crown and half were displayed in the gallery, and the rest at the school.



Barford St Martin's Big Coronation picnic lunch

Residents of all ages turned up in force to enjoy their picnics with friends and family. A huge array of delicious home-made cakes and tea were served in special vintage china teacups. Children enjoyed making crowns with some spectacular results that were fit for a King or Queen. Delicious Coronation quiches and Coronation chicken dishes all added to the special community atmosphere on the day.

Coombe Bissett

KING
CHARLES III

Patriotic Postmaster, Charles May, decorated the post office and village shop and then joined bell ringers from the village at St Michael and All Angels church to sound a special peal to mark the crowning of the new sovereign.

Charles said: "I normally put up bunting and flags for special royal occasions including last year's Platinum Jubilee for The Queen. Now we have extra decorations for the Coronation showing our new King Charles III. Coombe Bissett is only a small village but we like to show our support for the Royal family."

Corsham

More than 100 older people came together to enjoy The Big Afternoon Tea Party with live music and a chance to chat and find friendship. On Saturday The Pound screened the Coronation live, there was a mini 'Coronation Concert' supporting local performers, a Crown Trail for children and their families to follow around the town centre and on Monday the town focused on volunteering as part of the The Big Help Out.

©RICHARD HARRIS

Malmesbury

The sun came out and so did the picnic blankets, music was provided by the Malmesbury Concert Band and dancing by Malmesbury Morris. A service was held in Malmesbury Abbey with the Mayor, councillor Gavin Grant and deputy mayor Phil Exton, also in attendance was DL Sir Mike Pitt, town councillors, and the Warden and Freeman of Malmesbury.

Marlborough

At St Peter's church there was a school art exhibition and tower tours all weekend, with entertainment from the Police Band and Community Choir.

On Saturday The Parade cinema screened the Coronation live, Manton village threw a rather soggy but successful street party in the afternoon and in the evening the Marlborough Concert Orchestra and Marlborough Choral Society put on a Coronation Prom at St Mary's church.

Sunday began with a civic service at St Mary's church. It was also Big Lunch day and Marlborough's famously wide high street was the setting for a party. Spotted among the partygoers was cookery legend Pru Leith.

On stage the Marlborough Choral Society began and ended the party with the *National Anthem*, with musical performances throughout the afternoon. All primary school children have received commemorative mugs.

A big thank you to all the volunteers.

Swindon

Arkell's Brewery have released a beer to toast The King. Alex Arkell, Head Brewer said: "In keeping with our long tradition of celebrating royal milestones over our 180 years of brewing, we are extremely proud to release this Coronation Ale to honour our King. We have in fact celebrated six other monarchs coming to the throne since 1843, the first of course being Queen Victoria."

ARKELL'S
CORONATION
ALE

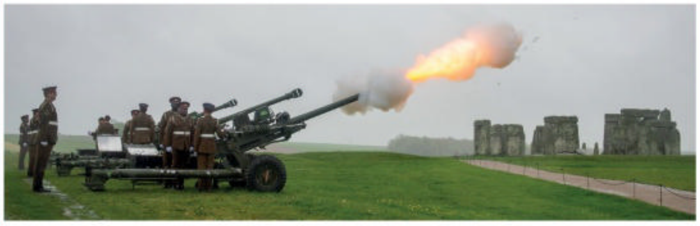
Zeals

The Green was alive with red, white, and blue, banners, bunting, laughter, happiness with at least 250 people across the ages attending the free Big Lunch. Coronation chicken and quiche were served. Cakes, all beautifully decorated combined to create a wonderful feast. Pupils of Whitesheet School created themed table covers with crowns, carriages and horses. The day was a combination of great organisation by a small team, many willing helpers, individuals and local businesses.

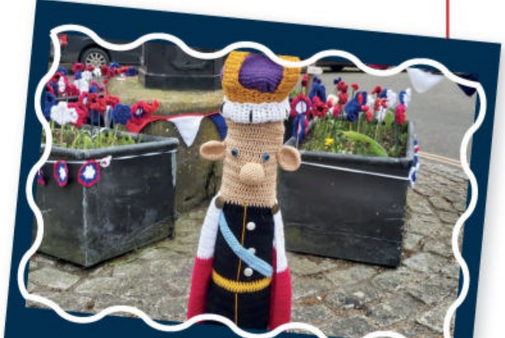
Salisbury Cathedral

For Katherine Dolphin, from the Cathedral's teaching office, preparations began in March. Helped by Claire Watling, and a team of volunteers they prepared yards of bunting templates and dozens of paper crowns ready for Coronation week."Our volunteers cut and sewed nearly a thousand bunts and almost every one was decorated by the end of the week. We started on April 29, and worked flat out until May 5. Around 800 people took part, including schools, and visitors from across the world.

Ancient stones witness historic gun salute to a new King



Soldiers from 14 Regiment Royal Artillery's Seringapatam Battery had the honour of firing a 21-gun salute at Stonehenge to mark the event. The guns were fired at the exact moment the St Edward's Crown was placed on The King's head. Lance Bombardier (LBdr) Samuel Reed, said: "It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, I'm so proud, it will be something I can tell my grand-children one day."



Tisbury

The Happy Hookers decorated the village in style complete with a crocheted King

Trowbridge

Trowbridge Future, is a small charity supporting communities in the town and surrounding area. They hosted two coronation themed kindness cafes – at Studley Green Community Centre and its Seymour Community Hub. These weekly events provide friendship, support and companionship. Sovereign Housing Association funded the parties, and everyone had a wonderful time.

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©STEPHANIE TROWELL

British blooms take centre stage

The King and Queen are both keen gardeners, this passion was reflected in choice of flowers that filled Westminster Abbey and their decision to use British grown flowers sourced through Flowers from the Farm. Liz Anderson from the organisation reveals more about their role.

THE BEAUTY, joy and variety of seasonal cut flowers and foliage adorned Westminster Abbey for the Coronation ceremony, grown sustainably on plots across the UK by more than 80 members of Flowers from the Farm.

The not-for-profit association champions artisan growers of local, seasonal British cut flowers including around 20 Wiltshire flower farmers and had been working closely with the floral designer, Shane Connolly, to bring a unique tapestry of springtime in the UK to the heart of the historic occasion.

Nestled amongst the floral installations were magnificent branches of beech, beautiful double peonies and historic tulips from the west Wiltshire organic grower, Polly Nicholson of Bayntun Flowers. “I feel honoured to have been involved in such an historic event,” said Polly, “to celebrate the Coronation of a King who has championed the environment, and in particular organic farming, throughout his life. He was a man ahead of his time, and now his time has come. To have played a small part in the Coronation feels very special.”

The flowers and foliage decorating the quire and the grave of the Unknown Warrior were brought to London in relays to reduce travel miles with pick-ups from local and regional hubs before being sorted at a pop-up national hub at a Bristol flower farm. “Being part of a collective group of like-minded individuals is important to me,” explained Polly. “Flower farming can be an isolating existence, and it helps to know that there are others out there on the same mission: to grow the greatest possible British flowers in the most environmentally friendly ways.”

Following the Coronation ceremony, the flowers were repurposed by the charity Floral Angels and distributed to care homes and hospices in London and Cambridge. WL

- *Bayntun Flowers is open to the public by appointment only. www.bayntunflowers.co.uk. To find your local flower farmer visit www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk*

Top left: Polly Nicholson from Bayntun Flowers supplied blooms grown in her garden just outside Calne; flowers from Wiltshire were sent to a farm hub in Bristol to be forwarded on to London.

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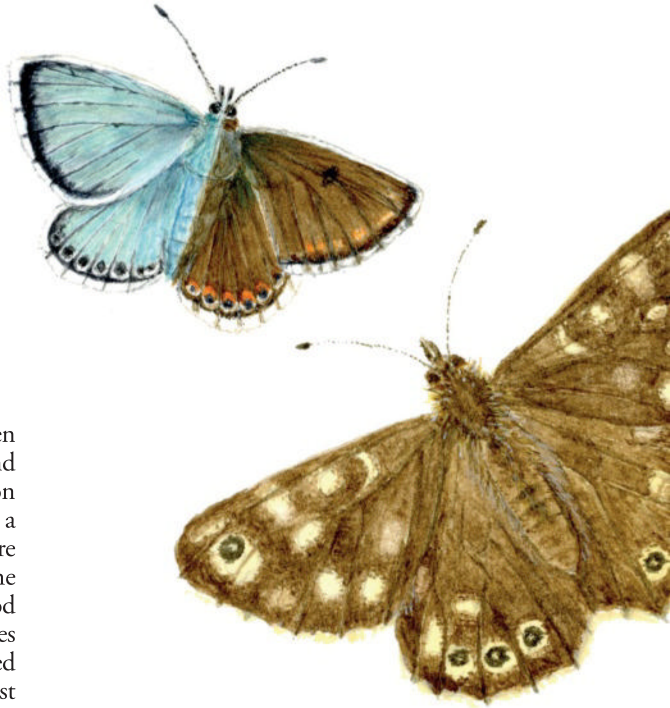
It’s going to be a Butterfly Summer



This month sees a new book fluttering into our local bookshops. Written by Sarah Gregory from Butterfly Conservation, it is a children’s guide to Wiltshire butterflies. Angela Leaman from the charity explains more about the project.

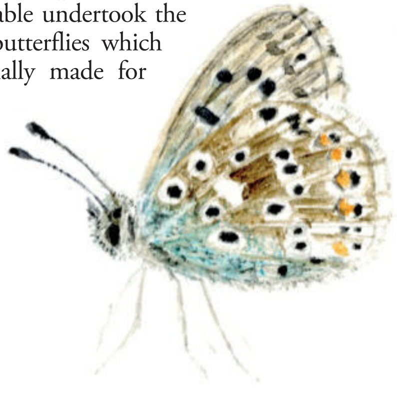
EXPERIENCES AS a child often spark a lifelong love of nature and this inspired Bradford on Avon resident Sarah Gregory to write a new children’s guide to Wiltshire butterflies. She explains more about the inspiration behind the book: “I have childhood memories of clouds of small blue butterflies on country walks. When a butterfly decided to alight on our hair or clothes was the most breath- taking moment.

“The number of butterflies has diminished since, but they are still there where there are flowers. Over the last 50 years I have lived and worked in towns where many children never have the chance to go to the countryside. Children are fascinated by wildlife on their screens, but they miss out on the thrill of the actual experience. This is the challenge of climbing a hill or exploring a wood. This is the excitement of spotting birds or insects. If we want to preserve our butterflies, we need all sorts of people to defend their habitats. The eight-year-old who remembers seeing butterflies dancing in a meadow, may become a voice for wildlife in the future”

The aim of the book is to encourage children and accompanying adults to explore the Wiltshire countryside. In the foreword Izzy Fry, 17-year-old co-founder of Tisbury Young Nature Watch, says “I can remember bounding round the meadows on my family’s farm with my bug hunting kit and magnifying pots”.

The book has been published by the Wiltshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation to give all children a path to this sort of wildlife experience.

The new guide describes six different butterflies, one for each month of the summer, and encourages adults and children to explore the countryside to find them. Hence a *Butterfly Summer*. Two sites are described for each butterfly, one in the north of the county and one in the south, and the guide is divided into two parts. The first tells children about the butterflies and how to find them; the second gives adults details of the location, parking, facilities for children and so on. The guide is finely illustrated and Sarah could often be seen sitting on a camping stool, drawing the landscapes. Her friend Gillian Constable undertook the paintings of butterflies which were all specially made for the book.



Right: Chalkhill Blue
Illustrations and paintings by Gillian Constable.

© IAIN H LEACH

Introducing the Wiltshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation

Sarah Gregory is a member of Butterfly Conservation, the UK charity dedicated to saving butterflies, moths and our natural environment. All profits from the book will fund the charity's activities in Wiltshire. Clive Patten, Chair of the Wiltshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation says: "We are very lucky in Wiltshire to have 45 of the 59 species of British butterflies, however numbers have declined significantly since the 1970s. Encounters with butterflies are now infrequent for many people and we don't want the next generation to have the same experience". A dedicated force of volunteers collects data on how butterflies and moths are faring across the county to guide their conservation. The other vital aspect of the branch's work is to bring people closer to moths and butterflies through a programme of talks, field trips and school visits.

Iford Manor Butterfly and Nature Day

A particular highlight is the annual Nature and Butterfly Day held at Iford Manor, Bradford on Avon. William and Marianne Cartwright-Hignett host Butterfly Conservation at the beautiful Iford Manor Estate and the event takes place this year on Sunday, July16, It is free, and families can enjoy children's arts and crafts and other nature activities on the estate. Visitors can explore the glorious orchid and wildflower meadows which stretch up the hillside, and butterfly experts will be on hand to guide visitors along the Butterfly Trail. The Manor has a café offering light refreshments or bring a picnic to have by the river.

Moths are also a big part of the insect scene at Iford Manor. Light traps are set up the night before and the catch, displayed in special cages at the Butterfly Conservation stand, is a major attraction. Moth expert Hugo Brooke says: "Children are fascinated by moths because they are so colourful, varied and can be surprisingly large. Being mainly nocturnal creatures, most sleep during the day so can be observed closely at rest. At the end of the day, it is equally exciting to watch them fly away when they are returned to nature." The record is 155 species which could easily be beaten this year if the weather is warm and muggy. **www.ifordmanor.co.uk**.

© PETER EELES

© IAIN H LEACH

Top right: Brimstone; Inset: Speckled Wood; Illustrations for *Butterfly Summer* shown here by Gillian Constable.

How to get involved

During the school holidays children can join the Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count which takes place from July 14 to August 6. Butterflies and moths are key indicators of a healthy ecosystem and the Count is the largest citizen-science project of its kind. Just spend 15 minutes in a sunny space and count how many butterflies of each type you see. Last year Wiltshire families counted a whopping 20,302 butterflies. Full details and a free identification guide are available from the Big Butterfly Count website. The family pages on the Butterfly Conservation website are also full of activities to teach young people about butterflies and moths, and fun for the whole family whatever the weather.

Sarah hopes that *Butterfly Summer* will inspire children to become interested in butterflies and curious to visit Wiltshire's wild spaces. A final word from Izzy Fry: "When walking through the countryside and seeing a Peacock or Red Admiral flitting by, it is impossible not to appreciate nature and have the urge to explore the natural world more".

BUTTERFLY SUMMER
A child's guide to finding butterflies in Wiltshire
Wiltshire Branch
Butterfly Conservation

- *Butterfly Summer is available from local bookshops, the Wiltshire page of the Butterfly Conservation website and online from Pemberley Books. Visit the following websites for more information:*
  - ***www.butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/wiltshire-branch***
  - ***www.bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org***
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Horatio's Garden is Chelsea's best

The team behind a Salisbury spinal injury charity is celebrating a remarkable achievement, not only have they won a prestigious Chelsea Flower Show gold medal, but the garden was also awarded the Best in Show award.

©OLIVER DIXON PHOTOGRAPHY

From left: Ryan Alexander, Hugo Bugg, Andre McMullan, Charlotte Harris, Jamie Haire, Olivia Chapple, Victoria Holton, and David Chapple.

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HORATIO'S GARDEN is named after Horatio Chapple, a schoolboy who wanted to be a doctor and who volunteered at The Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre in Salisbury. Tragically, Horatio's life was cut short at 17 when his camp was attacked by a polar bear whilst on an expedition in Svalbard in 2011. It was Horatio's idea to create a garden and his original research continues to shape each garden's design and the charity's aims to improve the lives of people affected by spinal injury across the UK.

The charity's vision is to sustainably grow thriving communities and biodiverse gardens in all 11 NHS spinal injury centres in the UK. To date they have opened six gardens in Salisbury, Scotland, Stoke Mandeville, the Midlands, London & Southeast and Wales with a seventh garden under construction in Northern Ireland and an eighth planned to open in Sheffield in 2024.

The winning garden at Chelsea Flower Show will be re-built in Sheffield on a car park, but the finished garden will be eight times the size of the show garden.

Designed by Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg, Horatio's Garden Chelsea is a garden layered with meaning and a place of true respite for those affected by traumatic spinal injuries. It embraces the mission of Horatio's Garden charity to nurture all those learning to live a new life after spinal injury and it is the antithesis of a busy, clinical hospital environment where patients often spend many months on a ward with little privacy following a life-changing, traumatic event.

For the first time this year on the show's Main Avenue, this is a garden that puts the priorities of all those with different mobility needs at its heart. WL

Visit Horatio's Garden Salisbury

The garden will be open through the National Garden Scheme on July 2.

Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre, Salisbury Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Odstock Road, Salisbury, SP2 8BJ.

Please park in car park 10, which will be free to NGS visitors on the day.

Admission £5, children free.
Tea and delicious cakes, made by Horatio's Garden volunteers, will be served in the Garden Room.
Refreshments in aid of Horatio's Garden.

This award-winning hospital garden, is designed by Cleve West. It is run by a head gardener and team of volunteers.

At 3pm there will be a short talk from the head gardener about therapeutic gardens and the work of Horatio's Garden.

For more information

For more information about Horatio's garden visit **www.horatiosgarden.org.uk**
For the National Garden Scheme visit **www.ngs.org.uk**

WILTSHIRE LIFE
AWARDS 2024

The ceremony will take place Friday 8th March 2024 at The Corn Exchange, Devizes.

Enter the *Wiltshire Life* Awards today

What are the *Wiltshire Life* awards?

The *Wiltshire Life* awards celebrate our outstanding and remarkable county. Each year we host a spectacular ceremony and dinner where we share the stories of creative endeavour, bravery, community spirit, business acumen, young entrepreneurship and sportsmanship of people who live here.

Do you know an organisation, project or individual who deserve a *Wiltshire Life* award?

There are 16 different categories, all recognising wonderful contributions to life in the county. We want to celebrate the very best of Wiltshire's people, businesses, and initiatives.

The judging process

Our judging panel is made up of experts within business, agriculture, charity and the arts. Their combined subject knowledge and expertise along with their deep commitment to the county and its people enables them to review and recognise the wide range of entries, and then select the finalists in each category.

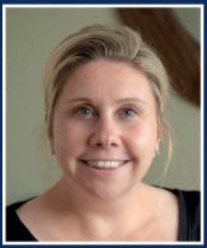
MEET THE JUDGES

Caroline Hole-Jones

Nicky Alberry

Colin Elwell

Russ Tunney



Louise Hunt-Skelley

Georgie Green

Victoria Nye

Mills Jackson

Ram Thiagarajah

Simply head to the awards website and follow the guidelines.

www.wiltshirelifeawards.co.uk

Closing date for entries: Friday 13th October 2023

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Conservation Project of the Year	RAMSBURY
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ADVERTORIAL

Feast your eyes *on county flavours*

From a new food festival in Chippenham to award winning local producers here is a flavour of what is on our doorstep.

©CHRISTIAN BARNETT

New food festival has all the right ingredients

Monkton Park in Chippenham provides the perfect location for an exciting new Food & Drink Festival, with a superb selection of entertainment, fine wines, delicious artisan foods and masterclasses.

Amongst the highlights of this year's event, celebrity co-presenter of BBC's *MasterChef* John Torode, will bring much laughter and Australian fun to the Chef's Kitchen on Saturday. You will have the chance to get up close and personal with him as he teaches you a range of new tips and tricks and invites you to ask him questions as he cooks.

Other inspirational chefs include *Great British Bake Off* 2021 finalist Chigs Parmar and Rosemary Shrager, who will entertain us as she shares her passion for trying new produce.

There will be plenty of family fun over the two days, and dogs can join in too with a Fun Dog Show in support of Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Alongside the food stands there will be so much more to enjoy, with live music and street theatre on offer, and children's entertainment which includes traditional Punch & Judy shows and street theatre.

• *The festival opens on Saturday July 8, from 10am until 7pm, and on Sunday July 9, from 10am until 5.00pm. For further information and to book your tickets, simply visit www.chippenhamfooddrinkfestival.co.uk.*

Downton Distillery

Downton Distillery creates a range of premium hand-crafted spirits with sustainability at the heart of we do. The distillery runs on green energy and in 2019 we introduced a gin refill scheme, which allows customers to bring their bottles to refill points, which helps to save bottles from landfill. Most gin producers import their all-important juniper berries from Italy or Poland, but we have used money from sales to fund a juniper rewilding programme on the Wiltshire Downs and it should soon be in use.

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• *Book a distillery tour and discover the magic of Downton Distillery.*
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WILTSHIRE LIFE
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The Magnificent Seed Rapeseed oil is grown by the Grant Family and pressed and bottled on their farm on the chalklands of Salisbury Plain.

Awarded *Wiltshire Life's* Independent Food Producer of the Year in 2021 and gaining both a Taste of The West Gold and a Great Taste award in 2022, the oil has been celebrated by chefs and awards judges for its smoothness and provenance. Care is taken to protect the rapeseed and the oil at every step of production, from regenerative farming methods (protecting the soil structure and supporting no use of insecticides) through slow cold pressing, settling, gentle filtering, and bottling in light protective packaging, all making sure the oil is at its best when it hits customers' plates.

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The oil is available online or from stockists listed on our website where you can also trace the field the rapeseed in your bottle grew in.

• *www.themagnificentseed.co.uk*

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Warm summer flavours

There is a new team at Pettifer's Hotel in Crudwell, their chef Ethan Rodgers has shared this recipe, with ingredients grown on the doorstep combined with those from further afield to make a summer dish to serve al fresco.

Spiced Roasted Chickpea, Labneh, Flat Bread, British Asparagus & Wild Garlic

Flat Bread

- 11g dried yeast
- 200g plain/wholemeal flour
- 180g Greek yoghurt
- 2 tbsp oil (olive, sunflower or vegetable), plus extra for cooking
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- 1tsp sugar
- 15g parsley

Labneh

- 500g Greek yoghurt
- ½ lemon
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp cracked black pepper

Roasted Chickpeas

- 1 tin 330g chickpeas
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp coriander
- 1 tsp Sumac
- ½ tsp extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ lemon

Asparagus

- 1 bunch local asparagus
- 10g salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Wild Garlic

- 50g wild garlic
- 100ml double cream
- ¼ tsp salt

Flat Bread

1. MIX the yeast and water together until dissolved and frothy.
2. Add to the other ingredients and knead until smooth.
3. Cover rest and prove for 20 mins
4. Split and roll into eight balls (freeze four for another day)
5. Roll to the desired shape and cook in a hot pan on both sides till fluffy

Labneh

1. Hang the yoghurt in muslin overnight to drain.
2. Once drained put into a bowl and mix with the rest of the ingredients

Roasted Chickpeas

1. Roast the cumin and coriander in a pan until gently roasted
2. Place chickpeas in a bowl add all the spices and olive oil
3. Squeeze over the lemon and roast on 210C for 15 minutes

Asparagus

1. Remove ears and stalk from the asparagus tips
2. Bring a medium size saucepan to a rolling boil and season heavily
3. Blanch the asparagus until very slightly tender
4. Remove roll in olive oil and season and chargrill

Wild Garlic

1. Pick and wash the wild garlic removing any hard stem
2. Bring a medium size saucepan to a rolling boil and season heavily
3. Bring the cream to a boil and remove from heat
4. Blanch the garlic until soft.
5. Combine and puree until smooth

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Vitriol over Vermentino

(or the fuss over a grape you’ve never heard of)

Grant Berry of Yapp Brothers wine merchants in Mere looks into the furore over the name of a grape

“*WHAT’S IN a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.”* Act 2, Scene 2. *Romeo & Juliet,* William Shakespeare

Mediterranean grape Vermentino has many synonyms. Known as Rolle in Provence, Pigato in Liguria, Favorita in Piedmont, it populates vines throughout the western Mediterranean – from southern France to Tuscany via the granite isle of Corsica and neighbouring Sardinia.

“In Languedoc, it is used to add a spoonful of cream and a sprinkling of aniseed and fennel to blends, but it’s a starring white variety on its own in Provence […] filmy, soft wines of lamb-like gentleness – the finest tissue paper or silk chiffon rendered liquid.” Andrew Jefford, Decanter.com

Why are French producers crying into their croissants and *café au laits?*

France makes as much Vermentino as Italy, yet producers now cannot label their wines as such. An obscure European Union (EU) law that aims to protect denominations of origin (PDO/PGI) now only permits ‘Vermentino’ to be used for wines from Italy, USA, Croatia and Australia. Sacré bleu!

French producers are revolting at being forced to use the synonym ‘Rolle’ instead and protests are going to the highest levels of wine officialdom plus no-doubt, the Elysée Palace. There may even be strikes – after all, *faire la grève* is almost a French national sport.

Outside Europe, there has been more Anglo-Saxon-style angst from Australia and New Zealand who are concerned about EU protectionism – following on from rows about using the original name ‘Prosecco’ for what is now called the ‘Glera’ grape (Australian sparkling wines formerly called Prosecco cannot be imported into Europe – so ‘protecting’ EU producers).

Why does this matter?

Vermentino is one of those grape varieties which deserves to be better known. Its crisp, lemon-balm scents, saline acidity and rich exotic fruit flavours make it perfect for summer sipping. Splitting hairs over what it can be called can get confusing for consumers and professionals – let’s keep it simple. After all, what’s in the bottle is what counts, surely?

Let me paint a picture for you, bear with… Imagine you’re seated on the terrace of a café overlooking the Mediterranean. A condensation-beaded glass of white wine is brought to your table with the remainder of the bottle nestled into a bucket of ice. The scents of bougainvillea and garrigue drift through the warm, evening air and you take your first sip. Fragrances of knobbly Sicilian lemons, jasmine and ripe Galia melons flood your senses and the faintest note of fuzzy, warm white peach touches your tongue. Is this about as close to heaven as it’s possible to get? Not until the platter of *fruits de mer* arrives. Then the world can wait while you feast.

“Garçon, encore une bouteille, s’il vous plait!”

If this talk of Vermentino/Rolle/Pigato/Favorita tickles your fancy, look out for the following wines from across the Mediterranean where Vermentino is either the sole grape or a dominant part of the blend. Regardless of nomenclature, look out for the enticing grape formerly known as Vermentino. WL

Rhône: *‘La Vieille Ferme’ (Waitrose, £7.50)*
Tuscany: *Vermentino di Bolgheri: Tenuta Guado al Tasso (Petersham Cellar, £22.50)*
Provence: *Coteaux d’Aix’: ‘Harmonie’ Domaine des Oullières (Yapp Brothers, £14.75)*
Corsica: *Sartène:*
Domaine Saparale
(Yapp Brothers, £19.50)

- *www.yapp.co.uk*

What should I eat with Vermentino?

Lemon-roasted chicken, grilled fish, chicken pastilla, ratatouille, and Malaysian curries.

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PHOTO: ED O'BRIEN

Gardening *in rubble*

Garden designer and beekeeper Sophie Butcher reveals how poor soil may deliver extraordinary results.

BUILDING WORKS can do a lot to destroy a garden. Builders tend to toss out rubbish and clean out their cement mixer in any convenient place – that future flower bed, ruining the soil. And when they have gone, you are often left with piles of broken concrete and bricks, heaps of sand, hardcore, plaster and plasterboard lying around. But all is not lost.

Garden designer Ed O'Brien lives in a terrace house in Bristol. After renovation works to his property, his garden was full of such rubbish. Instead of carting it all away, he decided to garden in what he had. 'I broke it up and laid it down over the clay subsoil about 20-30cm deep and planted it up in the autumn,' he says. The following spring his experiment started to bear fruit.

'I had watched YouTube videos of Nigel Dunnett (Professor of Planting Design and Vegetation Technology) and James Hitchmough (Emeritus Professor of Horticultural Ecology, both of Sheffield University) create gardens on engineered soils like mine. So I followed their example in my own front garden.

Ed used a lot of Sesleria autumnalis to provide structure in his garden. This grass forms a low, tidy evergreen hummock of grey-green foliage sporting silvery-white flower spikes from June to October. In the autumn the grass blades turn bright green. It's a fantastic plant to line paths and does well in sun or light shade, making a lovely back drop for other plants.

Into this he threaded plants that do well in dry, well-drained soil such as salvias, achilleas, hebes, nepetas (cat mint), rosemary, and a lot of bulbs. 'The garden turned out to be a bit early-season heavy, fading out in August,' he says, 'so I changed it up a bit and pulled out the achilleas and put in Echinacea pallida and Eryngium planum.'

Gravel gardens require less maintenance than gardens with a rich soil. 'I used a high-density planting scheme (seven to 10 plants per square metre) to minimise weed infiltration,' says Ed. 'And because the soil is so low in nutrients, you get fewer weeds. Meanwhile, growing plants with less water and nutrients makes for compacter, sturdier and more resilient vegetation rather than big, floppy foliage and flowers that require staking. Because I've chosen plants that like a dry soil, if we have a very wet year, my soil remains free draining, so I win both ways. Of course, the soil biomass will naturally build up even over three or four years. To slow this, I cut everything back in February and remove the waste.

'The advantage I had with planting in the autumn was that, after the initial watering in, the plants have not been watered since. I have had to do almost no weeding at all thanks to the poor soil. A gravel garden is much less maintenance than a lawn, which people don't seem to realise.'

- *Ed O'Brien Garden Design, www.edobrien.co.uk*

- *Sophie Butcher is the beekeeping garden designer based in Chippenham. www.hithergardendesigns.co.uk*

The Hebe rakaiensis and Sesleria autumnalis provide structure during the winter. Spring bulbs provide the colour.

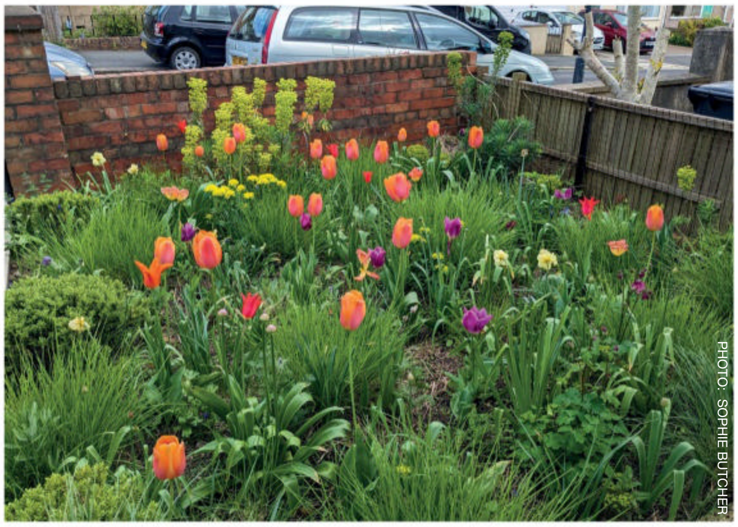


PHOTO: SOPHIE BUTCHER

The garden looks completely different in summer with nepetas threaded with Achillea 'Moonshine' and Lychnis coronaria 'Gardener's World'

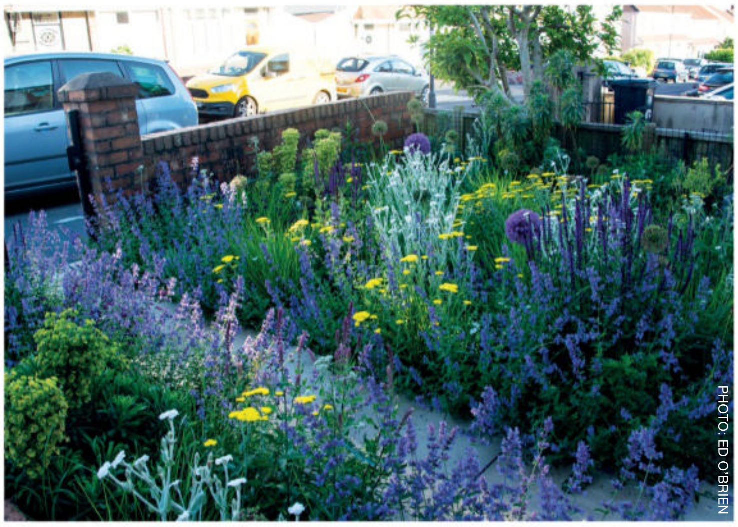


PHOTO: ED O'BRIEN

STUFF TO DO IN... *June*

- **Plant irises.** July, August and September are the three best months to do this; thanks to their rhizomes, they are resistant to drought and high temperatures. Planting them in the summer also allows them to develop new roots and settle well before the first cold.
- **Plant Blue Hearts.** If you want a healthy garden full of colour and life, rewilding is for you. It takes less effort than conventional gardening, and all the plants are already in place, waiting for a chance to grow, no wildflower mixes needed. If you are worried how your neighbours will view your rewilding efforts, put out a blue heart to start a conversation and show it is an intentional act to let the grass grow. Find out more: *https://bluecampaignhub.com/gardeners*
- **Sit a moment and listen to the birds.** I came across a marvellous app called Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab. It identifies birds from their song and has transformed my walks in the country. It currently supports 1,054 birds which it can identify from sound alone, based on a database of hundreds of call recordings for each type of bird. Load the app on your phone, get as close to the bird as you can, hold still and simply press record. The app will highlight the name of each bird as it sings, sometimes two or three at a time.
- **Cut back penstemon flowers** as they fade to just above a bud. This will encourage more flowers and it should keep going until the first frosts.
- **Prune wisteria.** Cut back the whippy side-shoots from the main branch framework to about 20cm from their base (about five leaves from the main stem).
- **Pick your sweet peas** as fast as you can and give them away to everyone when you run out of vases. The more you pick, the more they flower. Remove any seedheads you see forming to keep them flowering longer.
- **Cut back hardy geraniums** and delphiniums after the first flush of flowers to encourage new growth and more flowers.

Ed O'Brien's suggestions for a poor soil

Salvia 'Nachtvlinder' is an upright, bushy, semi-evergreen shrubby perennial that likes a sunny position. It has bright green aromatic leaves and upright racemes of whorled, purple flowers. Prolong flowering by removing flower spikes as soon as they start to fade. Protect from excessive cold and waterlogged soils.

Eryngium planum (sea holly) has sprays of thistle-like blue flowers on silver blue stems that will last through to spring, and look gorgeous rimmed in frost on a winter's day, and equally well in dried flower arrangements. Loved by pollinators. My favourite variety for a small garden is 'Blue Hobbit' for its petite size (up to 30cm), although 'Blue Cap', with its lovely delicate star-like flowers, adds height to a border if you want it (60-90cm tall).

Echinacea pallida (cone flower). This grows to about 125cm tall and has large, daisy-like flowers with swept back, slender pink petals. It's tough, does not need staking and flowers from July to September. The bees like the flowers; leave the seedheads for the birds.

Achillea 'Moonshine' (yarrow). This canary yellow yarrow will liven up any gravel garden. It is more resistant to flopping over than most other achilleas and rarely needs staking, especially on a poor soil, is long-flowering and drought-tolerant. Excellent as a cut flower, or hang the flowers upside down in the airing cupboard to dry out for dried flower arrangements in winter.

Euphorbia polychroma (spurge). This forms small, tidy mounds of dark green leaves about 40cm high, topped with a froth of chartreuse flowers. Although it has a short flowering season, it continues to look good throughout the year among the grasses. In autumn the foliage turns a shade of bronze.

Euphorbia characias subsp. characias 'Humpty Dumpty' is a compact, evergreen perennial to 60cm, with grey-green leaves and terminal clusters of bright, yellow-green flowers with a dark red eye.

Hebe rakaiensis (shrubby Veronica). This compact, evergreen, dome-shaped shrub has masses of tiny green leaves and short dense spikes of white flowers from early to mid summer. It adds structure to the garden in winter. An added bonus is that it remains tidy and you never need to prune it. It thrives in full sun or part shade and grows up to 90cm tall.

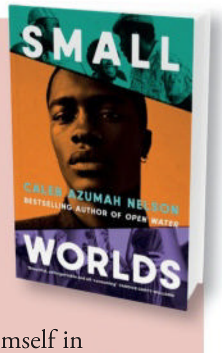
Nepeta racemosa 'Walker's Low' (cat mint). Loved for its tall spikes of violet flowers which grow to about 60cm tall, as well as for its aromatic leaves, making it perfect for edging paths; when you brush against it, the leaves release a lovely scent. It forms a long-flowering groundcover for a sunny border. If you clip it back after its first flush of flowers in June, it will continue to bloom through to the autumn.

A succession of bulbs: including crocuses, narcissus, Tulipa Dordogne, Allium 'Purple Sensation' and Allium 'Globemaster'.

Settle down with a good book

This month's selection have all been chosen by the team at Devizes Books, and it is an eclectic mix for summer reading - from calculated crime to cost of living conscious cookery.

Small Worlds
by Caleb Azumah Nelson



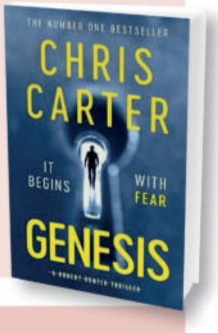
An exhilarating and expansive new novel about fathers and sons, faith and friendship. Stephen has only ever known himself in song. But what becomes of him when the music fades? Set over the course of three summers in Stephen's life, from London to Ghana and back again, *Small Worlds* is an exhilarating and expansive novel about the worlds we build for ourselves, the worlds we live, dance and love within.

ISBN: 2928377160081

Genesis
by Chris Carter

Not for the faint hearted in true Carter style this book features a borderline insane killer and the descriptions are graphic. The perpetrator feeds off instilling fear into their victims before brutally ending their life leaving no evidence behind, only poems and a crime scene. Hunter a psychologist in the police force needs to work fast to decipher the poems and catch the killer before they reach their final victim. A constant flow of intrigue, gore and suspense.

ISBN: 9781471197604



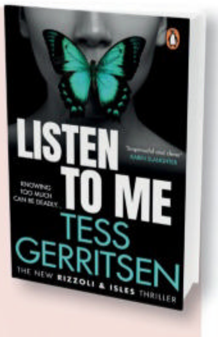
The Secrets of Rochester Place
by Iris Costello

THE SECRETS OF
ROCHESTER PLACE
IRIS COSTELLO

Set between the dusty halls of Rochester Place and the bustling streets of modern-day Tooting, this emotive, intricately layered mystery tells the spellbinding story of two people, separated by time, yet mysteriously connected through an enchanting Georgian house and the secrets within its walls. Bringing the past to the present, uncovering a long-buried secret in a unique way.

ISBN: 9780241994405

Listen To Me
by Tess Gerritsen



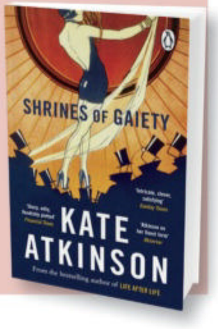
Latest in the Rizzoli and Isles series and it doesn't disappoint. The body of a widow and nurse is found brutally battered in her own home. Neighbours and colleagues have nothing but love and affection for her but in the recent weeks she had been making strange calls to old contacts and burner phones. This has all the hallmarks of another hit TV series. Great story that keeps you guessing.

ISBN: 9781529176049

Shrines of Gaiety
by Kate Atkinson

This book will transport you into the bohemian nightclubs of the 1920s. Here you will welcome Nellie Coker who is the owner of a string of nightclubs. Nellie is shrewd, ambitious and just wants the best for her six children.There is a dark side to this life with murders, criminal gangs and corrupt cops. The story contains a huge array of colourful characters but told with wit and tenderness.

ISBN: 9781804991053



Feed Your Family for Under a Fiver: Over 80 Budget-Friendly, Super Simple Recipes for the Whole Family
by Mitch Lane

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MITCH LANE

Try this excellent new cookbook – with no fancy equipment, skills or ingredients required. It provides quality budget recipes to help families cope with the current cost-of-living crisis. The recipes actually look appetising and there is food in there you can actually make and will want to eat. Something for all the family to tuck in to.

ISBN: 9780008600433

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